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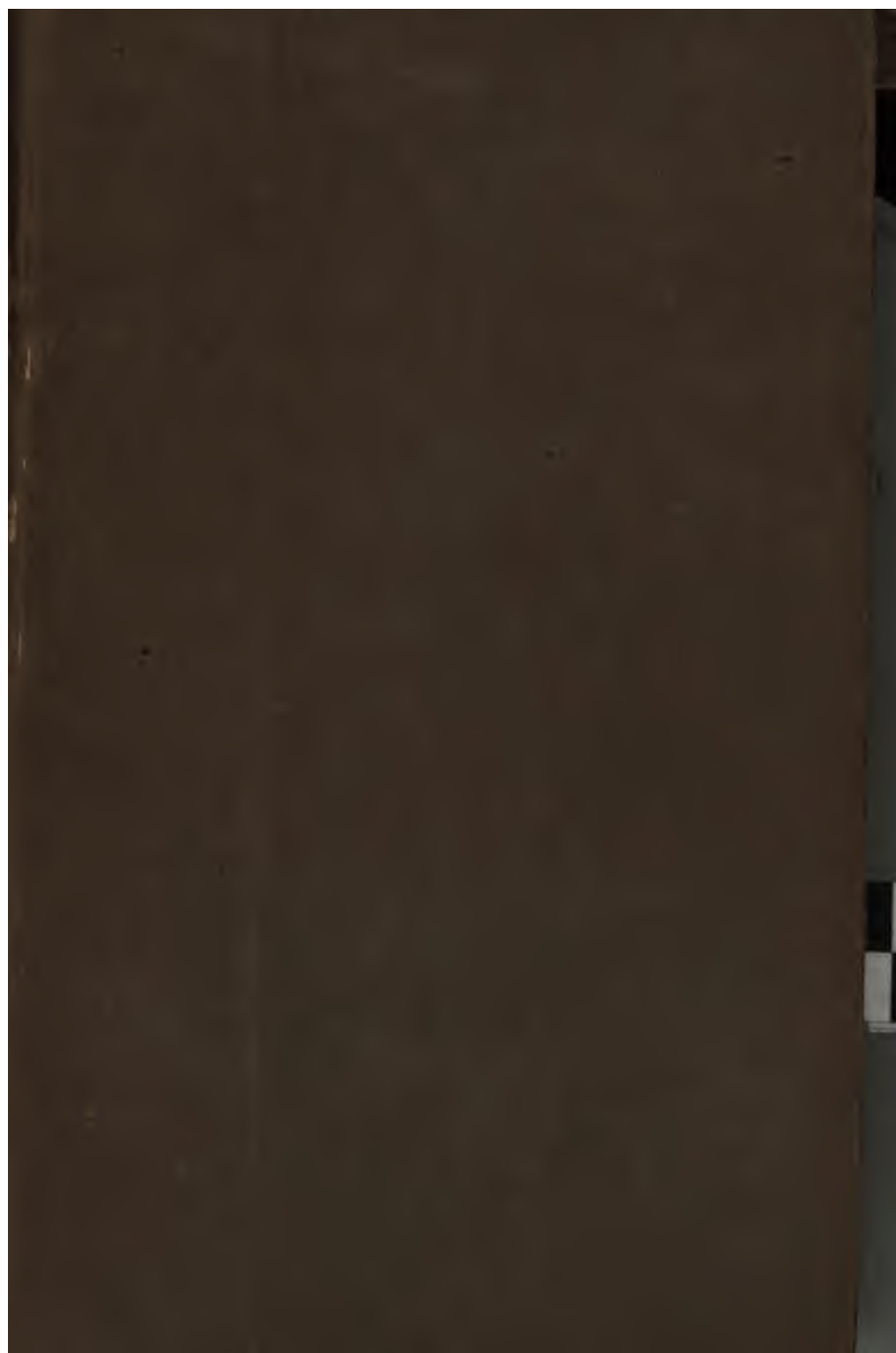
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**THE JOTTING BOOK.**



**THE JOTTING BOOK;**  
**A POLITICAL AND LITERARY**  
**EXPERIMENT;**  
**BY AN AMATEUR.**

---

I.—PROGRESSIVE THOUGHTS ON THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BEFORE AND SINCE THE REFORM BILL;  
INTENDED AS  
AN ARGUMENT FOR THE GENUINE FINALITY OF THAT MEASURE;  
BEING  
EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A RESOLUTE OPTIMIST IN ALL THAT REGARDS  
THE CONSTITUTION OF ENGLAND.

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“ESTO PERPETUA.”

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LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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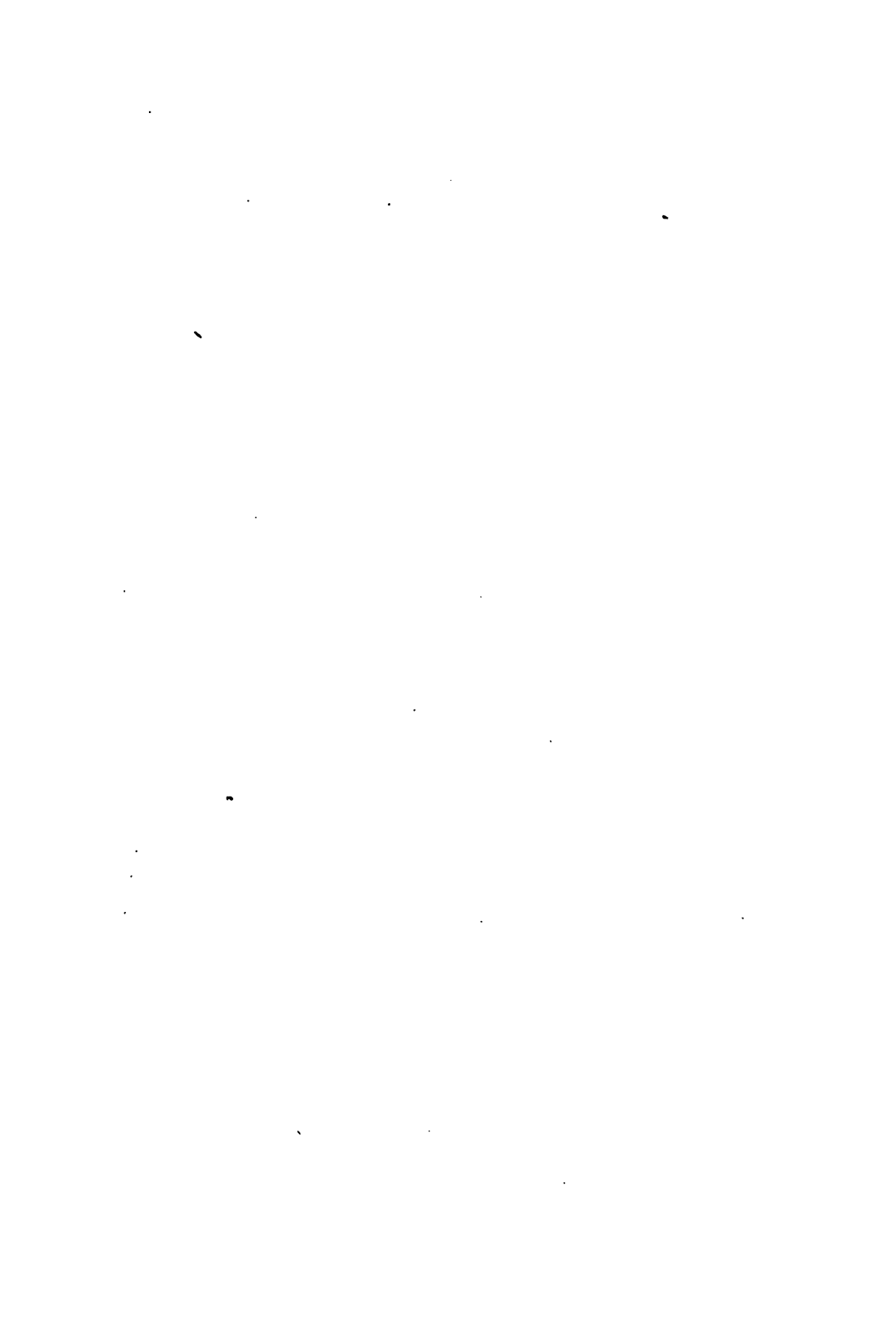


TO  
SIR ROBERT PEE L,  
LORD STANLEY,

AND

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT;

In different ways, three of the most consistent of  
Politicians and bravest of men; who have greatly  
helped to save, by never despairing of the Con-  
stitution of England; this Experimental Volume  
is inscribed by an unknown, but hearty admirer  
of their public services and private worth.



## P R E F A C E.

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THE main object of the present Publication is to assist in vindicating from the obvious but unmerited charge of inconsistency, two different and very numerous classes of the Friends of our EXISTING Constitution in Church and State :—

Those, on the one hand, who, having all along conscientiously resisted Parliamentary Reform, as dangerous and uncalled for, have yet been contented to make the best of it, when once carried through in spite of them ; and quite as conscientiously have conformed to the new and irreversible order of things as ever they consented to abide by the old, notwithstanding its admitted anomalies and apparent defects :—And those, on the other hand, who, having all along

conscientiously advocated and urged forward the cause of Parliamentary Reform,—(not thereby secretly intending revolution,)—and having carried their object triumphantly, are now contented to abide by their own professions and promises, and to rest satisfied with the new and improved order of things.

This object of vindication it is proposed in some measure to accomplish by the faithful exhibition of a corresponding progress in the opinions of an obscure individual, of probably average intelligence and means of observation, who happens to have “jotted down,” from time to time, his own impressions, exactly as they occurred, on this and other topics.

These “JOTTINGS”—if the uncouth provincial word be admissible,—are given verbatim, for several reasons. One may be mentioned. The essence of the present Experiment consists in the minute and scrupulous fidelity with which is indicated the PROGRESS and even oscillations of the Author's own opinions; so like what he believes to have been the less carefully noted progress of multitudes besides, both in the high-

way and arena of the public service, and in the by-paths and obscure corners of private life.

It may be proper, accordingly, to observe that all additions and alterations *whatsoever* made at the time of publication (1839) are placed within square brackets [thus] ; a plan adopted from Mr. Croker's valuable edition of Boswell's Johnson.

If the Author have vanity enough to believe these rough notes may, by possibility, prove of some use, he has common sense enough to know that the addition of so obscure a name as his own would hardly be giving the Experiment fair play. He has otherwise no wish for concealment by assuming the anonymous character.

In defence of the numerous repetitions and "ringing the changes" on a very few ideas, with which this Work may confessedly be charged, the Author has only to observe that it is sometimes useful to look at the same thing from many different points of view ; and that the identical statement in a new set of circumstances, or after an important change, is by no means always a mere idle repetition.

His principal apprehension is that of doing harm by the weak advocacy of a good cause :

*“Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget :”*

Of this reproach the Author must take his chance. It is a risk in the service, and amongst the most formidable that could be incurred by a volunteer.

If it be objected that there is something absurd in the sententiousness of too many portions of this Work, and in the careless and familiar tone of other portions, the Author has only to say that their publication is quite an after-thought ; and that the very imperfections and contradictions involved in it are regarded by himself as essential or fiducial elements in the Experiment.

The safe rule of the Poet has likewise been pretty faithfully observed ; unless, to be sure, the nine years of probation ought to commence, instead of terminating, with the present period.

BUT NOW OR NEVER seems to be the time for all true Conservative Reformers, of every shape and shade,—for all true friends of our essentially Protestant Constitution,—forgiving and for-

getting much that is past,—to make a resolute and united stand for the threatened Institutions of our Monarchy; and towards this great object even the humblest contribution may help in its degree.

The stand must clearly be made on the Reform Bill of 1832; and, though late enough, we are not an hour too late.

“ABOVE ALL THINGS, LET THERE BE NO DEPENDENCY!”

*London, June 27, 1839.*

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# THE JOTTING BOOK

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## CHAPTER I.

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, WRITTEN PREVIOUS TO THE DECISION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION IN 1829.

*August 21, 1825.*

[1.]—Essay on the House of Commons; the result of nature and constitution of man; not of political wisdom.—The historical truth is, perhaps, that it [has been] the result of experiment and theory perpetually modified, so as to fit the standard of man's nature,—till at last the parts have come to correspond.

*January 25, 1826.*

[2.]—It has sometimes occurred to me that the characteristic and most salutary feature of our Constitution is the perpetual series of minor Reforms which are going on. They are minor, because never suffered to gather to a head; and because carefully and openly discussed and checked by every species of interest. All exactly as it should be.

*May 30.*

[3.]—Most of the useful and practical institutions we know of are not the result of wisdom or speculation, either old or recent, but of experiment and adaptation to cases actually occurring, which wise and necessary amendments are gradually confirmed into a rule. In order to produce excellence in any system, whether of Government or any other shifting matter, there must be a perpetual readiness to make gradual and minor changes; and steady resistance of every other principle of Reform than this species of adaptation to circumstances, and the [slow]\* progress of public opinion.

*June 27.*

[4.]—The grand security for a stable and efficient Government—for an equilibrium of motion in the political wheel—is the admission of every power or interest, including [perhaps] the vicious and idle, as well as the good, to its *due* share of influence and representation. Any other system inevitably leads to the accumulation of inflammable and permanently elastic humours, which will,

\* [All *additions* made in 1839, the date of publication, are placed within square brackets—[thus]. For instance, the word "*slow*" in the above sentence is added in 1839; and so throughout the volume, strictly.]

sooner or later, produce an explosion,—general or partial according to circumstances. Our British policy allows these to pop off gradually in the form of perpetual squibs and crackers; which, in the more formidable shape of confined barrels of gunpowder in the cellar, would some day blow King, Lords, and Commons into the air.

*July 10.*

[5.]—The cardinal fault of Reformers in general is, that they do not take into sufficient account, and at their sterling value, the advantages, immediate and remote, of the old system; and still more the circumstance that thousands of lateral and subordinate matters have arranged and moulded themselves with a reference to these old things: matters which have no concern with the abstract good or evil of the point on which Reform is sought, and on which, if quite insulated, there could be no sort of doubt as to the propriety of Reform. The mere circumstance of a law,—[even] a bad law,—being published and acted upon, and trusted to, is a considerable argument against its *sudden* alteration.

Sometimes, unquestionably, the evil will out-balance all these considerations, and the Reform must and ought to be made. Only, the circumstance hinted at should not be overlooked so much as it is at times. The best and surcest Reformer

is the very moderate one. The worst riveter of abuses is he who sets one grain too roughly or too rapidly about the same delicate task.

*July 26.*

[6.]—There is, indeed, approaching, a new and splendid era in the Moral, Political, and Scientific world: its slowness is the sublime advance of tremendous and irresistible power.

*October 21.*

[7.]—The British Constitution is a monstrous mass of theoretical absurdities and anomalies and [apparent] contradictions, jostled into perfect harmony and adaptation to the purpose.

*November 1.*

[8.]—Fresh confirmations start up on every side to prove that the practical theory of Morals [and Politics], though apparently imperfect and unphilosophical, is in fact the best we can hope for or desire, and therefore the most [truly] philosophical.


As an illustration, rather than anything else, —though, in such a question, an illustration, or extensive example, becomes itself a confirmation

of what is advanced,—I may allude to the British Constitution, and particularly to the House of Commons: in practice this is found the most admirable piece of efficient mechanism ever devised by the wisdom of man; or, one should say with greater truth, ever adjusted from the multitude of accidents and contending forces by the wisdom of God. Yet, in theory, what can be more perverted, and corrupt, and inefficient in a thousand ways? Listen to the theoretical declaimers, and they will tell you England is ruined;—the House of Commons, in its present state, a delusion! In *practice* it is found to be admirable; therefore it *is* admirable!

Yet another confirmation of the practical view is found in the omnipotence and infallibility of the public voice, deliberately expressed. Such is the merest appeal to practice, to the utter disregard of fancied reasoning. If reasoning and the public voice [permanently] disagree, the inference is, that there is somewhere or other a defective link in the chain of reasoning.

*November 5.*

[9.]—The English character, the finest example of practical morality in all its shades and shapes the world has yet seen, may, in my opinion, [and I am no Englishman,] be in a great measure





traced to the Church of England [and her] service, by far the noblest production of the experience of ages.

To this, in a great measure, we owe the liberty, and intelligence, and benevolence, and politeness, and sterling worth of the Community,—not in the lowest degree conspicuous in the highest ranks of society. To this the genuine patriot and philanthropist,—the conscientious statesman,—the valiant soldier, — the indomitable sailor that guards our coasts,—the delicate and cultivated female: all these, and I could lengthen out the list, may fairly be traced, in a very considerable degree, and by no means circuitously or remotely, to the immediate and secondary, the direct and consequential influence of the Church of England.

Never has the world yet seen so complete an example of practical wisdom as our Constitution; of which, be it remembered, the Church of England is by no means a subordinate part at this hour. Nor is the system less excellent because liable to abuses; since, in the course of its operation, it has invariably produced its own correction or check.

*November 7.*


[10.]—My theory of the British Constitution, if that may be so denominated which is in op-

position to all theory, is that it is grounded and maintained in experience alone, to the [express] disregard of all [theoretical] principles [or abstract reasoning]; that the British Constitution is, in short, one great example of the practical and experimental system. Such in its virtual origin: such in its actual operation: such in the course of all its future oscillations.

---

January 16, 1827.

[11.]—\* \* \* \* [The] grand object [is] the *virtual and substantial* maintenance of our invaluable Constitution unimpaired and essentially unchanged. This can only be hoped for and effected by a perpetually changing system of policy, still *gradually* adapting itself to the changing opinions and circumstances of the age, the country, and the world. The object is to maintain the Constitution,—a tried and glorious fabric,—and this could never be effected by a literal adherence to old maxims, when the field for their exertion is essentially different. No! to secure the reality we must [often, more or less] abandon the appearance. And, after all, to place the same thing in another light, the excellence of the British Constitution was and is to obey the influence of public opinion through all its important changes: its



essence is Representation. Thus, as in the Church the best objects are served by an [almost] unchanging Liturgy and permanent Establishment; so, but inversely, in the State, the grand end of the Constitution is attained by a perpetual series of [minute and not always] deliberate changes. A political bigot, who stickles for a literal and blind adherence to old forms, in contempt of the progress of public opinion, sacrifices the substance to the name, and is virtually allied to the worst species of excessive Reformers.

*January 18.*

[12.]—How close, and at what interval of time should practical legislation follow the theoretical statements of speculative reasoners on Politics and Political Economy?

Should the Legislature follow or lead the general voice?

*January 29.*

[13.]—The degree of liberty which any nation is prepared or fitted to enjoy,—their “capacity for liberty,”—may be measured by their power of self-command; in other words, by their intelligence and reasonableness.

*February 6.*

[14.]—" *Laissez-nous faire* " and the " *vis medicatrix* " will do all, in Politics and Political Economy. Let us then have liberty. This is as different, however, from licence, as it is possible for one thing to be from another. Licence is the liberty of the vicious and the slavery of the good.

*February 14.*

[15.]—The grounding principle, as I take it, of our Constitution is, that " *Might is Right* ; " and its stability depends on its near approach to this standard. Let us not forget that there are many kinds of might, besides that of brute force: there is the might of wealth, of intelligence, of skill, of public opinion; above all, there is the power of opposing [physical] force to [physical] force. The workmen have a right to combine, because they have the might to do so. They will cease to abuse the power when they find themselves the losers, [and cannot afford it]; when they cease to have the might.

*February 18.*

[16.]—The expression " *common sense*," is generally opposed to " *fine or exalted sense*."

It might perhaps with more justice—with reference both to the origin and meaning of the phrase—be opposed rather to “any peculiar or singular mode of thinking.” “Common” is a word which bears two different significations; it signifies sometimes what is ordinary or usual, in contradistinction to what is extraordinary or eccentric; sometimes it expresses a good deal more, the union or *community* of interest, or opinion, or property; as in the expressions “Such a feature is common to the whole family;” “That field is common property.”

There are likewise, if I mistake not, two significations of the word “sense,” of which the less obvious is nearly synonymous with the word “opinion;” as “the sense of the meeting,” and so on.

It has occurred to me just now, for the first time, that the true import of the phrase “common sense” might be paraphrased, or diffusely and variedly expressed thus: “The opinion, or prevailing sentiment, common to the whole body of the nation, or the world.” That opinions held in common by any great majority seldom partake of an enthusiastic or refined character, may be perfectly true; but that circumstance does not affect the [correctness] of what is now thrown out. “Common sense,” or, at all events, “*The*

common sense," would thus prove nearly synonymous with "Public opinion;" "The common opinion or sense of the Nation or age;" "The sense of the Community at large."

Did it not savour of a pun, one might say, with a very tolerable degree of truth, that "The *common* sense" of this Nation finds its expression, and maintains its standard, in the House of "Commons."

*April 22.*

[17.]—\* \* \* In point of fact, things are, by the usage of the world,—by the understood and received usage of language,—seldom in reality and literally what they are *called*, and at first sight appear; and into all our calculations, whether for preservation or reform, this important element must enter, if we desire to reason justly, or to act prudently. And it is in consequence of the exceeding complication and nicety of adjustment, thus introduced into even the most ordinary affairs of political life, that so much depends [upon]—because so much must, of dire necessity, be trusted to—the sheer honesty of purpose of the individual statesman, and his clearness of intellect. Hardly a single point connected with Parliament, or with the usage of the best society, is called by its literal name; and that such should be the case is not only necessary, but desirable.

*April 30.*

[18.]—In public life the grand secret of respectability and happiness and success is [personal] independence; and one of the readiest ways to secure independence, in the most important sense of the word, is to cultivate [a] taste in Literature and the Fine Arts, so as to provide a constant and elegant resource against any defeat or delay.

[19.]—So completely do my views agree with the existing state of things, that, though [rather] an emancipationist, I am of opinion that the Catholic question should not be made a Cabinet question, until the present uncertainty as to the wishes of the great body of the Nation and of Parliament be altered one way or other; and that alteration must be gradual.

*May 15.*

[20.]—Truth and the right on any given point is single and will prevail; and that party which is right on the greatest number of most important measures will [in the long-run] prevail. The grand advantage possessed by a Ministry,—and which a wise Ministry knows how to wield,—is, that they have the choice of their topics and of their line of conduct. If they choose the right line and the proper topics, they are invincible;

and just as often, and just as far, as they depart from this right, do they furnish materials,—weapons and vantage-ground—for an efficient Opposition. How exactly all this stands as it ought to do!

[21.]—In the present day,—I speak of little beyond and all the time within the 19th century, and in England,—in the present day, all the men of eminence,—or very nearly all,—are honest men—men of integrity and courage—“all honourable men;” and when we compare one with another, or prefer one or two to the rest, the shades of difference are comparatively slight in these respects; and the *least* of those who rise to fame and power would have proved a leader and an ornament in any other age and country.

The explanation [of this circumstance] which has just occurred to me, is that of the scrutiny afforded, and the intimate public discussion promoted, by the free Press we enjoy, and which nothing but integrity and real merit can possibly [long] withstand; and under whose influence every virtue and every energy is [sooner or later] dragged to light, and forced to triumph: every touch of selfishness or fear or dishonesty is condemned and degraded.

By the Press, I mean free discussion of every description, and the debates of all the assemblies, public and private, through the country, whose



decisions are so soon disseminated and enforced by the Press. Nothing but virtue can pass such an ordeal.

*May 20.*

[22.]—There cannot easily be conceived a better illustration of real inconsistency than what is commonly called consistency in Party Politics: that steadiness which makes a man adhere to a Party, both in opinion and vote, through a thousand changes in the principles of the Party itself. —A man of perfectly steady, or of steadily progressive principles, must *appear* to change as often as either Party change their principles; though in fact [it may be that] he has alone remained consistent, and the rest "*en masse*" have vacillated.

*June 3.*

[23.]—My views on the subject of Reform, in many different quarters, become more and more resolute, and, at the same time, more and more cautious: particularly in Legal, Ecclesiastical, Educational, and Parliamentary matters. How very short-sighted is the policy of precipitate Reformers!—even slightly precipitate,—how they defeat their object!

*June 21.*

[24.]—If we hold the creed “Whatever is right,” it follows, as a necessary consequence, that whatever is [quite] *inevitable* must be for the best; and we shall do wisely to make the best of it.

If we reach this creed with more certainty the more largely we extend our view, either over our own history and experience, or so as to include those of others, surely it were short-sighted to suffer our happy faith to be swayed by any partial and homefelt evil; still less by the apprehension of evil.

*June 28.*

[25.]—*Mem.* The vast importance of routine—the very soul of careful and efficient business, the perplexity of novices, the triumph of proficients. For, consider the origin of any routine: no other than what [has been] found best and most convenient, gradually modified by experience.

No wonder they are alarmed at Reformers: yet proper Reform—and how cautious!—is the secret of all that is excellent in legislation, morals, science—everything!

*June 29.*

[26.]—When I speak of fashion, I seldom



mean dandyism, nor yet nobility, but something different from either, which may be considered as the best and highest style, whether practised by the Peer or the Commoner—something near the grand average of the best usage over the world at any moment,—modified, as that ever is, by the recollection also of former times. There is besides always some one leading Nation at each period, towards whose usage there is more or less bias,—that, I suspect, in which there is the greatest amount, for the time, of public and private virtue.

It is [perhaps] on the principle above hinted that neither dress nor profuse expenditure can secure even the appearance of genuine fashion and elegance. And it is because there is something hereditary even in the virtues,—something which survives the tombs of the great founders of each clan,—that [on the whole] we have the best chance of finding elegance and virtue in the higher orders of society. When these or any portion become selfish or vicious, their decline may be dated from that hour. Indeed, the great circle of society is kept up in this way: the nobles are getting spoiled, and their places gradually supplied from the lower orders: for virtue, in whatever garb or disguise, is still the only true nobility; and vice, in the Cabinet or on the Throne, is base and vulgar; and these are, respectively,

almost synonymous with self-command and self-indulgence ; with self-sacrifice and selfishness.

*July 1.*

[27.]—I talked the other day of the comparative morals of Pliny's times and our own. The grand distinction lies here, that then there were ten or twelve honest men and about as many free men in the state : now there are many thousands of the one and many millions of the other : nor are there wanting men who excel [the rest], even amongst those who are so good. And we must look higher than the times of Pliny for the seeds of those principles which have since branched out into the goodly tree of modern civilization, liberty, and moral sentiment ; and later than his times for even its partial development.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

*July 7.*

[28.]—In many instances a remedy is too late when the evil has grown to the height of being conspicuous and pressing : in many others its ap-

plication were injurious till loudly called for. It were well worth a legislator's while to master this distinction. Perhaps in politics and political economy, and every department of legislation, civil and criminal, the latter method,—the after-application of remedy,—is alone useful and advisable. It is grounded on the principle of "*laissez faire*," and on the impossibility of reasoning "*à priori*" in such matters: it is a remote extension of the Baconian or experimental method. On the other hand, there are certain instances and certain departments in all these subjects, where prevention and prospective legislation is alone useful or safe.

Perhaps the true policy would be to combine the two methods,—to legislate by anticipation, but to use past experience as the only [materials] to work upon.

*July 21.*

[29.]—[Reading Sir W. Scott's *Life of Napoleon*.] Now for the French Revolution. I pause to take breath: that event "the most important, perhaps, during its currency and in its consequences which the annals of mankind afford."

I have ever looked on the French Revolution as the grand link between ancient and modern times; a new era has since arisen—not in that devoted country alone, but in others for whose

benefit the dreadful sacrifice was offered up—the formidable experiment performed—the drama of blood, and anarchy, and irreligion represented.

I have more faith in the example of the French Revolution, as a protection to our [own] religion, laws, and liberties, than in all the safeguards of our Constitution put together : it is this feeling which has so long rendered me comparatively,—perhaps blameably,—indifferent to all previous history, foreign and domestic, ancient and modern ; their uses have been [in a certain degree] cancelled by this great master-lesson. Nor is it in politics alone that this mighty change has been so recently wrought. The natural history of Man has hence received fresh and vigorous illustration ;—a new world has arisen. And the inundation of which Sir Walter speaks might have been likened to the [fanciful] “*Débacle*” of the Geologists ; a giant wave [rushing] over Europe, and the great Globe itself, at one mighty sweep ;—new-modelling all the valleys and the hills, and leaving but faint traces, except in the larger features, of the old state of things.

*July 25.*

[30.]—No administration [in England] can be in any degree permanent which does not successfully pursue what is right in the main : “ They must have intelligence to conceive, honesty

to plan, and vigour to execute the right." As long as the Ministry do right the Opposition is contemptible. The instant they do wrong, whether from stupidity, dishonesty, or want of nerve, they arm the Opposition with the right, who in their turn become invincible.

And the proximate [or rather remote] cause of all this is probably here—that there is a great mass, a "*vis inertiae*" of sober, interested, intelligent, and influential people in the country, ever ready to support what they can be made to believe the right.

*July 31.*

[31.]—By cutting off the care of fame, as an express and direct object, we cut off one, at least, of the most anxious and most endless causes of exhaustion, from the already fully exercised lives of the greatest men. Indifferent to fame, save as a secondary consequence of works or actions projected and achieved from different motives, and through the aid of steadier and more substantial supports, men of the first mould (indeed of any mould,—for it is a proportional question—) may greatly increase their power of doing good and efficient work. Half the anxiety actually bestowed by noble minds on this merely selfish object—for it is hardly more and hardly less—the pursuit of fame—their last infirmity, and

truly no better than an infirmity—if duly economised, and properly directed, might earn three times the amount [even of fame], by the accomplishment of fresh objects worthy of applause.

Fame, like other selfish objects, should never be expressly sought: it should follow as a consequence of noble deeds; and ever will, like the rest, [almost] as certainly follow as these deserve it.


\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

*August 9.*

[32.]—To hear people talk just now of the severe life of official men, and to reflect how just, in many respects, is the observation, seems, somehow, to add fresh dignity to what was before exalted; and, by the idea of danger, almost to reach the sublime. [Pitt], Perceval, Castlereagh, Liverpool, Canning: what were or what are their





lives? And what the end of their magnificent career?

It argues a splendid state of public affairs when to seek the highest honours is an effort of self-devotion!—where poverty, disease, and death are the ostensible rewards; and yet there are ever in succession able and worthy men ready to assume the dangerous helm!

*August 10.*

[33.]—The intelligence of Mr. Canning's death has just met my eye.

[34.]—[In] the "Author of Waverley's Napoleon," [I] read the following instructive and, as it were, appropriate and ominous passage (p. 86. vol. ii.):—"It has been said, that the government which is best administered is best. This maxim is true for the time, but for the time only; as good administration depends often on the life of individuals, or other circumstances in themselves mutable. One would rather incline to say, that the government is best calculated to produce the happiness of a nation which is best adapted to the existing state of the country which it governs, and possesses at the same time such internal means of regeneration as may enable it to keep pace with the changes

“ of circumstances, and accommodate itself to the  
“ unavoidable alterations which must occur in a  
“ progressive state of society.”

*August 12.*

[35.]—Idea of suggesting civility towards his contemporaries to the editor of a newspaper, on the principle “ Plus fait douceur que violence ; ” indeed, on the general principle, that we ever gain our object best by polite and gentle means. The effect, too, on the public mind might be beneficial. I cannot doubt of the success to the person first using such means ; or, by reflection, to the others.

The whole tone of the periodical Press might thus be raised, and permanently raised, several degrees. And when we recollect that their existence and utility, or rather influence, depends, in a great measure, on the principle of “ expression imparting and heightening the feeling expressed,” it were difficult to calculate the extensive effect on public manners, and eventually on morals, that this simple alteration might produce.

Let the “ Gentlemen of the Press ” treat each other, and especially their opponents, like gentlemen ; interpret each other charitably, listen well, and give due weight to whatever opinions are expressed. All, mark me, with a view most

effectually to promote, not so much the public interests as their own particular party interests.

*August 27.*

[36.]—The just medium has very little to do with mediocrity. It is the height of excellence, which is surely nothing mean or incomplete [or middling]; it is often the due mixture and adjustment of rashness and scrupulous caution,—or rather a due succession of such efforts; not a tame, neutral compound of half measures.

*September 3.*

[37.]—That stately Frigate which carried Canning and his fortunes became a wreck from two causes: she struck on the rock of impetuosity and hasty temper; and went to pieces on the thirsty quicksand of applause. How different, had Canning cared less for applause, and had he been ever gentle, instead of occasionally violent! how much greater, and happier, and more efficient!

*September 8.*

[38.]—The occasions of brilliant exertion, like the stars to which they lead, are arranged in con-

stellations. They are not equally distributed in time or space, but in groups; like the calamities and the blessings in which they originate, or to which they give rise.

*October 27.*

[39.]—Refinement, either of nations or individual characters, is commensurate with the correction, or at least the restraint, of selfishness.

The Americans seem to be selfish, and it were singular if otherwise. They are more likely, for a time, to retrograde than to advance in civilization; for their Franklins and Washingtons were half English in birth and breeding, or the immediate descendants of true Englishmen. The present generation are less so—

—“*mox daturi  
Progeniem vitiosiore;*”

and it may be long before, in their progress, which must be gradual, *though sure and gigantic*, they reach the height of intelligence and virtue of their sires. They have too much room, and too much liberty, as yet, for perfect freedom such as ours.

*November 18.*

[40.]—Taking it for granted, which I am most

willing to do, that the Church of England service and whole system, as it now stands, is at or near the maximum of attainable perfection—as I conceive the Political, and especially the Parliamentary, Constitution now to be—the question remains, how shall things be virtually kept as near as possible to their present position? I answer, not, certainly, by blind and bigoted adherence to the letter of the law in either department of Church or State; but by certain most careful, and partial, and timid, and [often] little more than nominal Reforms. There are certain grosser abuses in either to be retrenched, and certain tendencies to abuse to be checked or turned to use; and thus alone can we hope to transmit to our children, and they to their children's children, the uncorrupted inheritance of our Constitution.

*November 30.*

[41.]—The passage from Cicero de Re Publica [the work recently recovered by Signor Angelo Maio] which I promised to transcribe is as follows. Book I. chap. 45.

[N.B.] An excellent sketch of the British Constitution:—

“Quod ita cum sit, tribus primis generibus

“longe præstat, mea sententia, regium; regio  
 “autem ipsi præstabit id quod erit æquatum et  
 “temperatum ex tribus optimis rerum publica-  
 “rum modis. Placet enim esse quiddam in re  
 “publica præstans et regale; esse aliud auctori-  
 “tate principum partum ac tributum; esse quas-  
 “dam res servatas iudicio voluntatique multitu-  
 “dinis. Hæc constitutio primum habet æquabili-  
 “tatem quandam magnam, qua carere diutius vix  
 “possunt liberi; deinde firmitudinem, quod et illa  
 “prima facile in contraria vitia convertuntur, ut  
 “existat ex rege dominus, ex optimatibus factio,  
 “ex populo turba et confusio; quodque ipsa  
 “genera generibus sæpe commutantur novis.  
 “Hoc in hac juncta moderateque permixta con-  
 “formatione rei publicæ non ferme sine magnis  
 “principum vitiis evenit. Non est enim causa  
 “conversionis ubi in suo quisque est gradu fir-  
 “miter collocatus, et non subest quo præcipitet  
 “ac decidat.”

*December 21.*

[42.]—[A professor] ought to inculcate de-  
 ference to [his] own authority by careful respect,  
 on his own part, to the great names of his pe-  
 culiar science. The tendency of youth is all the  
 other way, to a vicious degree of excess; nor is  
 the habit of thought thus nourished, instead of  
 being carefully [counteracted], laid down with

youth ; it is carried by most people to the grave. Due deference of [to] every constituted authority is one of the very prime and Socratic [we ought rather to say Christian] secrets of happiness and efficiency,—of truth and virtue and power ;—and it is one of the hardest of any to acquire, because the pride of man perpetually rejects and opposes its admission. Its sincere adoption leads at once to delegation, the true Herculean principle of action ; and constitutes in fact that modesty of true science which is the basis of all legitimate confidence.

*December 26.*

[43.]—Talking of nations, it may be said that the characteristic of rudeness or barbarism is selfishness in the manners and thoughts of the population ; that polish, or refinement, or civilization consists in the removal of selfishness, and the substitution of generosity, patriotism, and politeness ; and that the corruption of manners consists in a relapse or return to selfishness,—retaining the ceremony and dress of refinement,—the vigour and virtue gone. While England at this hour seems nearer than ever, and nearer than any other nation, to the just and true point of civilization, Scotland seems hardly to have reached it ; America to be still far behind ; and Italy and France

to have passed into degeneracy and second selfishness.

*December 27.*

[44.]—Analogy of the progress of private and public opinion: after a certain advance, some landmarks of principle and opinion are as clearly understood and admitted by the public mind as common honesty and veracity in the private mind of a gentleman.

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*January 15, 1828.*

[45.]—If the Tories now return in full force to office, they will return better instructed by the sharp intermediate lesson; as in our Monarchy, the charm has been broken—the succession interrupted; and that is a wholesome possibility to keep in mind, both for the King and the People!

*January 25.*

[46.]—Freedom, to allow the self-adjusting principle to operate, [seems] the true secret of public or political economy, with just enough of protection or government interference to hold people to their promises, and from injuring others; a necessary check on the selfishness of



men, as the freedom spoken of is the allowance of its due and just operation.

*Mem.*—It seems not the office of Government to speculate or experiment, but rather to encourage and protect private speculation and experiment.

*February 12.*

[47.]—Let no man embark on the perilous sea of Public Life who is not independent, either by hereditary rank and fortune; or by a liberal and sufficiently lucrative profession; or partly by both of these.

The want of this was the error of Burke, and even of Canning: its possession is the glory and the security of Brougham and Peel, as it was of Romilly and Pitt. \* \* \* \* It is the business of every poor man, and an important part of his duty, to earn his independence, and secure it fast by laborious personal exertion.

*February 13.*

[48.]—We seem to have the faculty of using our optics—physical or moral—in two very different ways, each most useful and important—in the distinct and particular, and in the vague and general way: with this special observance, that we can never adjust either species of optics with

exact precision for more than one object at a time ; and that, while one [object] is seen distinctly, many more are vaguely [to be] kept in view.


To combine and manage properly *both* of these is the key to real truth and consistency ; the key to much of composition ; as well as to much of fair estimate and contemplation.

*February 19.*

[49.]—*Mem.*—Most of our legislators are amateurs, not artists.

*February 26.*

[50.]—I conceive Mr. \* \* \* 's assertion of the principle of self-justification, even at the expense of one's chief, as by no manner of means tenable to the extent he seems to have urged it in the present political controversy with \* \* \*, the late Premier. Such a sweeping and selfish system would, it appears to me, strike at the root of all truly confidential intercourse between the members of an Administration. A man should be ready on many such occasions to risk, and, on a few, distinctly and palpably to sacrifice, his individual feelings, and even his reputation : all save his integrity and personal honour.



*March 27.*

[51.]—In political, economical, and other inquiries, endeavour to find out, by careful estimates and observations of the past, what is the real and true and practical rate of the progress of opinion and improvement; at what rate an *acknowledged* truth or convenience travels its way through the prejudices, and ignorances, and indolences of the different ranks of different communities; what is the “correction,” or modification, or “error,” to be allowed for in the application of almost any strictly accurate principle,—*the users not being strictly accurate reasoners*: and all this farther complicated by the different shades of ambiguity in the truth of the supposed principle.

All this [seems] essential for practice, and [is] too little regarded; all capable of accurate estimate, probably by the aid of the Diagram.

One would think some improvements might travel as fast as the London Royal Mail; but, in thinking so, we should mistake the matter in 99999 cases out of every 100000.

The friction must be [very] largely taken into account.

*April 8. At ———.*

[52.]—I would rather retain such poetical pos-

session of all these domains of our nobility and richer gentry than such possession as their respective proprietors have. I would not exchange the possession of these houses and lands (in the which I am already [to many intents and purposes] "seized and infest") for the more substantial, but [probably] far less enjoyable possession of their feudal owners; theirs may be the "dominium utile,"—mine is the "dulce:" they the "Vassals,"—I the "Superior," of the soil. I'd rather, besides, cut out my path through the Hills and the Forest, than find it a velvet turf all strewed with flowers. [Though poor,] I have [almost] no wish ungratified.

*April 18.*

[53.] All party-spirit is some modification of selfishness.

[*Note of 1838.*—I believe this an entire misconception of the matter. Properly understood, adhesion to a party is almost always a *check* on selfishness, and a legitimate surrender of individual interests and opinions.]

*May 21.*

{54.] The progress of Politics and Morals, not less than the progress of [other] science, seems

after this fashion : each successive race of agents and observers spends his [? its] time and efforts in elaborating certain truths, and in their elucidation to the pitch or point of axioms, or admitted and undeniable propositions ; and with these the next generation starts forward afresh on the endless and delightful race : not useless if, in their turn, they leave, at length, a set of similar instruments of further investigation to the Millions that are to follow.

*June 2.*

[55.] My respect for Mr. Peel has gradually risen of late : I think we shall see him Premier some day ; and not, perhaps, undeservedly.

*June 9.*

[56.] \* \* \* The whole discussion [on Mr. Huskisson's explanation] affords a curious and instructive peep at the mechanism or anatomy of public life ; and it is pleasing to think how high and pure the motives and the conduct of all [the leading] parties come to appear the more minutely they are investigated. Happy the country that possesses such Rulers, and such a theatre for their exertion, and such an ordeal for their cross-examination !

*June 13.*

[57.] I always thought and said from the beginning, that is, looking back to the first dilemmas occasioned by the civil death of Lord Liverpool—at all events after the death of [Mr.] Canning,—that the Duke of Wellington would succeed admirably as a Minister,—and I believe so still,—mainly because a great portion of his experience has lain in this very direction, or nearly so: the duties of a Commander-in-chief being essentially different in kind or character, as well as in degree, from those of the mere soldier; a distinction applicable to no one individual in a whole army but to the Commander-in-chief alone, who is perpetually brought into contact with official men at home, as well as with the Foreigners to whom he is opposed; and who alone enjoys the true power of thinking, and alone incurs the true responsibility of acting.

In the next place, I am of opinion that the Duke, thus qualified for Office, may still so far retain the impress of his military character in all his habits of thought and action, that he will best succeed, and the public will most surely profit, by his invaluable services, when he has the entire command, unchecked and even unadvised, except in so far as he chooses to consult others.

In the next place, my confidence in the Duke's disinterested integrity, not less than his thrice-

potential sagacity, is such, that I should very willingly surrender to his hands this [sort of] absolute government of the State.

*July 27.*

[58.]—Whatever is hard and dry is commonly so from the fault or ignorance of the learner. Eventually, it would appear, the matter is often reversed, and proficient's delight most in what was before thought most dry, only because most difficult and least understood.

Of all sciences,—so far as I know anything of any science,—that of Political Economy appears to me just now the most difficult: and surely it is amongst the most practically important; and one great source of its obscurity arises from the ignorant presumption of the men, women, and children who are its objects, and who think themselves qualified to judge of the nicest points, because these relate to their own every-day concerns; as if that were not among the best [of] reasons for their almost hopeless perversity of judgment and worst ignorance! They seldom think of pronouncing on a question in Mathematics or Chemistry, or in the practice of the Fine Arts, without going through some sort of deliberate education in those quarters; but with Politics and Political Economy it is quite otherwise. And

[even] our Legislators are, generally speaking, but men, women, and children; with here and there an Angel of light, or a Giant in his strength.

*August 21.*

[59.]—The younger a man, in one sense of the word youth, the older is he in another. At any given moment we shall suppose A. is 28 years old, and B. is 38; then will B. of course be described in common language as the elder of the two; in one important respect, however, A. has the advantage or seniority: A., if not an older citizen of the world, is yet the citizen of an older world; *first* impressions and *first* trials are said to be most powerful and most influential, and no man can be more than once placed for the *first* time in all the various predicaments of life: A. undergoes these successive trials and receives these first impressions at a later period of the world's experience than B. has done before him; consequently, if we suppose that both have reached their maturity, each having run the gauntlet of youth and education, then, other things being supposed alike, A. will possess the advantage of B., whether we suppose A. and B., as above, nearly contemporaries, or suppose them separated, in this breathing world, by the lapse of centuries of fresh invention and maturer wisdom.



Of course B. keeps the lead up to a certain point; the rivals are then for a while equal in efficiency, and presently A. passes forward, to be, in his turn, surpassed by some younger brother in the ceaseless course.

The admission or acquisition of new ideas after a certain period seems difficult; after yet another period, almost impossible.

[60.]—But what this period of maturity of intellect [may be] in any instance or class of instances must depend on the calibre and structure of the particular minds described, and their opportunities of development; what [may be] the exact point of one intellect taking the lead of another of older growth must depend on the comparison of a thousand circumstances, and, in the first place, of the intellects compared.

*August 22.*

[61.]—Though in some respects and in some instances to be lamented, there result great advantages both to the theory and practice of almost any subject from the circumstance that the practical men are rarely conversant theoretically with their own particular business in all its bearings.

Too minute acquaintance with the theory

might sometimes help to distort [and sophisticate] the conduct and the statement of the facts, and thus remove the most salutary of all checks which the theorist whose object is truth ought to be anxious to apply to his own conclusions.

Some people are sufficiently obtuse to imagine theory and practice antithetically opposed to each other, as if all genuine theory were not grounded in practice and the reality of things! As if the very distinction between false theory and genuine were not the circumstance of this agreement or disagreement with the facts! The true course in such instances of detected error is to change the theory, in whole or in part, so as to accommodate its conclusions to the newly-discovered facts.

This subject stirs my bile as much as almost any I could name; [to hear people exclaim] "Oh, it's all very well in theory, but in practice quite another thing."

*Sept. 6.*

[62.]—Many Political and many Economical questions seem to admit, and some hardly to admit, of compromise. It were no unimportant matter to ascertain with precision which questions fall under the one of these descriptions, and which fall under the other; and then no small matter to

bring the principle of compromise into ready operation in all those instances thus found to admit, or rather to invite, its application.

Perhaps, in a general way, the rule may be found to be somewhere here; that, whenever mere pecuniary or property interests are concerned and found in conflict, compromise should come into play; but otherwise, when rights and liberties, and faith and justice, are concerned.


*Sept. 7.*

[63.]—Great Britain ought [perhaps] to take the liberal line without higgling about reciprocity: her truest interests will thus indubitably be served in the long-run, as surely as in private life the triumph of generosity is certain and not remote.

True economy is the secret of true wealth; and true economy is large and liberal policy, among nations not less than individuals—among individuals not less than among nations.

The principles of selfishness and its opposite admit of strict and literal application in one set of instances as assuredly as in the other; and, if we can elaborate their laws in either quarter, the argument is easily extended to the rest.

[64.]—For practical diplomacy and public eco-



mony, and generally for the reduction of all theory to practice, one grand element in every calculation should be the friction ; a large allowance to be made on the score of prejudice and sheer laziness ; besides a hundred other shades of selfish fear and narrow interests ; to say nothing of still less worthy motives, jealousy, revenge, and so forth, which clog the wheels of the political and moral machine of human society.

Of course every reasonable theorist has largely allowed for all these disturbing and obstructing causes ; *yet not enough.*

*September 10.*

[68.]—True theory, [or general principle,] in every department, is the Fly-wheel to check and urge the machinery by turns ; to overcome the friction of prejudice and selfish fear ; and to moderate the rashness of innovation and enthusiasm.

*September 13.*

[69.]—[Read] first page and half of the Preface to [the Book of Common Prayer] ; a favourite passage, which has ever seemed to me to place the [WHOLE] subject of Reform on its true and safest basis. [“It hath been the wisdom of the “Church of England, ever since the first com-

“piling of her public Liturgy, to keep the mean  
“between the two extremes of too much stiff-  
“ness in refusing, and of too much easiness in  
“admitting any variation from it. For, as on the  
“one side common experience sheweth, that where  
“a change hath been made of things advisedly  
“established, (no evident necessity so requiring,)  
“sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued;  
“and those many times more and greater than  
“the evils that were intended to be remedied by  
“such change: so, on the other side, the par-  
“ticular forms of divine worship, and the rites and  
“ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being  
“things in their own nature indifferent and  
“alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but rea-  
“sonable, that, upon weighty and important con-  
“siderations, according to the various exigency  
“of times and occasions, such changes and altera-  
“tions should be made therein, as to those that  
“are in place of authority should from time to  
“time seem either necessary or expedient.”]

*September 27.*

[70.]—I might have mentioned about a week ago, that my old opinion in regard to a divided Cabinet has been gradually changed. A Cabinet, it appears to me, should not be divided on any important points: the Premier is, to almost all

intents and purposes, a Commander-in-chief of an army,—and all the rest ought implicitly to co-operate, and for the time at least to think little for themselves.

A divided Parliament with all my heart; but the Executive as a man!

*October 20.*

[71.]—*Mem.*—The immense use and growing pleasure of sincere, due deference to experienced authority. The remark I mean to be general, for its instances multiply daily; and, if I were wiser, would multiply still more. \* \* \* Due deference to authority was no small part of the useful wisdom of Socrates; a variety of the [Christian] due diffidence of ourselves. Whether the authority result from experience prior or local. Well managed, a wise man may thus, in a degree, possess himself of the attributes of ubiquity, and a life beyond his own feeble and narrow span; a species of anticipation or rather converse of the delegation principle, that mightiest lever of practical efficiency.

*October 22.*

[72.]—To know who “to swear by” almost implicitly, [is] no small matter in little things;

and a mighty matter in the mighty. [“ ’Tis mightiest in the mightiest ! ”]

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*October 24.*

[73.]—To talk of theory and practice, as many people talk, appears to me to imply an ignorance of the true nature of both: for no practice can be just which is at variance with true theory; nor any theory just which is at variance with genuine practice.

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*March 4, 1829.*

[74.]—[I am] not sorry, on the whole, at Mr. Peel's defeat at Oxford; because the loss gives an earnestness to the sacrifice on his [Right] Honourable part. Claudio is glad at the defeat, because he would not like to see the Fly-wheel of the Church too easily checked or changed.

*March 8.*

[75.]—Evening at Claudio's almost exclusively occupied with reading aloud Mr. Peel's speech on the Catholic question of Thursday last. [5 March, 1829.] An able and upright man.

*March 23.*

[76.]—Mr. Peel's recent and present conduct [appears to me] a fine instance and example of political self-sacrifice; an occasion which he has shown he deserved [to enjoy] by the use he has made of it.

*March 29.*

[77.]—The love of dispraise were a more legitimate object for a public man, within certain limits, than the love of praise. The man who steadily does his duty among party interests and influences will probably offend both sides, and meet their censure.

*April 7.*

[78.]—The division in the House of Lords on the Catholic Question has reached us by express. Well done the Duke and his voice potential! 105 of majority.

*April 9.*

[79.]—[Struck] with some expressions in the Duke's reply:—"Through good report and bad report;" and—"We have sacrificed ourselves."

All good service, public and domestic, implies and requires self-sacrifice in some shape or other.

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## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CARRYING OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION, TILL THE  
INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM BILL, ON 1ST OF MARCH, 1831.

*April 9, 1829.*

[80.]—Were most things in politics, usage, and morals the result of theoretical reasoning, there would be the less risk in change for theoretical reasons. But as most things have arranged themselves we scarcely know how and care not wherefore, the chances are always great that every change will be accompanied or followed by unforeseen inconveniences.

Whether these probably amount to the known evils sought to be removed, is perhaps the most important and the most frequent enquiry for a practical statesman. A very large proportional departure from the accurate balance is essential to justify a change: the "quantum," however, varying with almost every topic, according to the origin of the usage and the circumstances of its continuance.

[81.]—Perhaps the difficulty alluded to this morning in regard to the policy of changes, will be found to contain its own means of solution in the very statement. In proportion as a measure or usage has originated or subsisted in theoretical reasons, let us venture to apply theoretical remedies: in proportion as the origin has been practical and obscure and old, and its reasons are unknown, let us beware of tampering.

Tell me precisely why a thing exists so and so, and I shall judge of its propriety: tell me “you cannot discover [or even conceive] why a thing should be suffered to exist so and so for an hour,” and I shall be more cautious how I venture to judge of its propriety!

*April 30.*

[82.]—With half an eye to some of —’s conversation yesterday, I cannot well see why economical enquiries should be considered more beyond our reach or depth than several others we are in the habit of discussing: the more especially as we are both aware of their peculiar difficulties, and sincerely convinced of our ignorance and imperfect means of forming a decision. We had been talking of the respective merits of the agricultural and commercial interests. My own notion is, that most of these questions are discussed too narrowly and as if insulated, instead

of being mixed up with a thousand more; particularly with those of a moral aspect.

The true Wealth of Nations, I am strongly inclined to believe, must consist in the possession of whatever most truly constitutes the wealth and happiness of individuals. In genuine freedom, public virtue, security, refinement, and the due amount of conveniences and luxuries: not in sheer riches or numbers. In the possession of a favourite Church Establishment; a free Press; a just division of labour through all parts of society. There seems much good in the Aristocracy and landed interest, beyond the wealth of commerce, where the two are inconsistent. Better be steady than rich.

I like to keep my opinions open to external influences; more particularly on such questions of the common good, often too intricate and evanescent for full discussion; and so to be rather settled by an appeal to usage than to reasoning; rather to what people have found or fancied best, on the whole, than what any man or set of men may imagine and clearly *prove* to be so.

*May 17.*

[83.]—Edin. Review, p. 189. March, 1829.

“This is that noble science of Politics which of all sciences is the most important to the welfare

“of nations ;—which of all sciences most tends to  
“expand and invigorate the mind ;—which draws  
“nutriment and ornament from every part of phi-  
“losophy and literature, and dispenses in return  
“nutriment and ornament to all.”

[84.]—When a topic or affair reaches a certain pitch of intricacy, our time will generally be better directed to the due selection of our Guides than to the partial and incompetent examination of their suggestions : at least “*prima facie*,” and for general and extra-professional purposes.

*June 3.*

[85.]—Is he the more obedient servant of the public opinion [and interests] who obeys the dictates of a particular moment ; or [he who obeys them] on the whole and in the long run ?

*June 22.*

[86.]—The experiments of Society, and Politics and the [Fine] Arts take various periods for their completion and due multiplication : but no hint is wholly lost ; and the child of the present day is in many respects equal in wisdom [say rather in knowledge] to the sage of olden time ;

and, in his turn, will yield to children yet unborn. There seems no reason to suppose a change in the body of man or in the instincts of animals, but in that nobler part which distinguishes Man above the inferior animals there is progression;—the accumulation of knowledge and powers;—and probably an increase, in proportion, of human happiness. The British Constitution [was] a matter of many centuries to elaborate; and we now have only to look round us to learn how truly we enjoy its benefits.

*August 5.*

[87.]—All power whose exercise is unreasonable, irresponsible, inconsistent, and selfish, is despotism; none more certainly than the dominion of the Mob.

*September 24.*

[88.]—The vote or opinion of any single individual whatsoever on any topic of importance and difficulty ought to be received with the utmost suspicion, and acted upon with the utmost degree of caution when *opposed* to the general current of existing opinions and existing establishments. But the single vote of an individual accustomed to think for himself, and free from any interested motive, in the formation or expression of his opinion, may be received as safe and useful when

it agrees with and confirms the experience of others: for in these circumstances the individual opinion may be said, in some sense, to be confirmed by the general voice. The real confirmation or defeat is afterwards; and, as yet, at any given moment, unknown.

And much of what is now said in the comparison of different individuals and the [relative] value and safety of their opinions, may be fairly extended by any man to the estimate of his own various opinions. Let every man distrust the soundness of his reasoning when the conclusion differs from previous opinions, and opposes itself to existing institutions.

*October 4.*

[89.]—Read the “Conclusion” of Southey’s Colloquies with a great deal of vague and curious interest. \* \* \* All is alarm or nothing. I have more faith in the British Constitution and in the Christian scheme than “Montesinos” seems to entertain. [I am] a more obstinate and dogged Optimist, where these are the themes.

But what is my opinion [compared] to Montesinos’? Almost nothing to censure; but a good deal when given in approbation of things as they are and have been.

*October 9.*

[90.]—Mr. —’s exposé of his political practice

the other day to Claudio seems to me sound and safe: to attend mainly to one or two objects; and for all the rest to spend his time and attention in ascertaining the men who are worthy of trust; and to follow these almost implicitly. This [were] of all the truest way of thinking and acting for himself.

*November 16.*

[91.]—Clear enough perception last night,—not entirely for the first time,—of the Reform question in its leading “rapports.” Ready and judicious aptitude to change [seems] the virtue to be aimed at or retained, in a multitude of quarters; and that system, viz. our present Constitution, and especially in the [House of] Commons, which best secures this advantage *elsewhere*, is best; and [is] *itself* to be retained with care.

*December 17.*

[92.]—Dr. Lawrence in speaking of Burke (p. 447 of 2. Prior) [says] “It seems as if it had “been endowed with such transcendent powers, “and informed with such extensive knowledge, “only to bear the more striking testimony in these “days of rash presumption, how much the great- “est mind is singly inferior to the accumulated “efforts of innumerable minds in the long flow of “centuries.”

This, in my [humble and ignorant] opinion, [is] one of the grand keys to all practical and scientific wisdom in every department of Politics, Art, Poetry, or Philosophy.

*December 19.*

[93.]—[Perhaps] all great measures of Reform, such as the Catholic question,—ought to be carried by their old opponents; by men long pulling and still inclined to pull in the reverse direction from the change proposed: as we see a hogshead lowered [into a cellar] by men pulling in the opposite way from that in which it is carefully lowered along the inclined plank: secured, too, by ropes and pulleys.

*December 20.*

[94.]—Quarterly Review, Sept. 1826, p. 463.  
“ An aversion to consider revolution in *the abstract* as an infallible guide to liberty, and an honest preference of the existing order of society, are not incompatible with the love and the pursuit of genuine freedom. They may not only co-exist with, but be in themselves the best proof of the most active and the most liberal feelings in favour of the advancement of nations, in knowledge and in liberty itself.”

The key to much of my political creed, both present, and recent, and remote.

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*January 2, 1830.*

[95.]—I should desire unequivocally and unreservedly to ascertain the right and true, in things the greatest and the least, in order to help their establishment in any quarter I hold dear ; this I should desire to do at all costs and hazards, because convinced that nothing but these can long endure ; and that there can be little good in many quarters without long endurance. And I should desire to protect [and, to the utmost of my feeble efforts, to assist] the existing order of things in Church and State, because, in the full and free exercise of my discretion, guided as above, *i. e.* with sincere desire to learn the truth at all hazards, I have come deliberately to be of opinion that the said existing order is very good : very true to human nature and society ; and all the circumstances to which it comes to be applied.

*January 21.*

[96.]—\* \* \* \* See how admirably things adjust themselves—or rather are nicely adjusted by a Power beyond and often contradictory to the intentions of the agent !

And thus it is in a thousand other instances in our ecclesiastical and political Constitution. The ultimate and supreme guidance being with the Author of nature and Ruler of events ; the

proximate means and causes of such admirable arrangement being public and private free discussion, and the sheer [long] endurance of the system thus discussed, leaving room for the gradual operation and adjustment of all the powers and interests that be, and ought to be. Such, at least, is my theory of the British Constitution, whose stability I believe to depend on its conformity with the laws of nature, and aptitude to the course of events. Of wisdom superior to that of any individual either to originate or correct: superior even to the collective wisdom of any given moment. The result of ages of experience operating on principles derived [from] and afterwards amended by the wisdom of successive ages. All things [being thus] more nearly in their true places,—with just subordination throughout,—than the world, perhaps, has ever seen before.

*January 24.*

[97.]—Don't let us forget such passages as that at p. 101 of Moore's [Life of Lord] Byron: "Taste is over with us," &c.—should we incline, —(like the worshippers of Burke—[in regard to his prescience]—)—to extol the prescience and astonishing sagacity of Byron:—"Taste is over with us; and another century will sweep our empire, our literature, and our name, from all but a place in the annals of mankind, Nov. 1807."

[N. B.] Since that period have been written all

Byron's own productions, and all the Waverley Novels. And the Battle of Waterloo has been fought; and the Catholic question carried—Prescience, to be sure!—

*February 12.*

[98.]—[It is] clear enough there can be no approximation to real and virtual equality in this world without very great departures from apparent equality.

*February 23.*

[99.]—[It is] contradictory in the Reformers and Whigs in general to call themselves peculiarly constitutional. They are the true worshippers who believe, as I do most sincerely, that our Constitution has a constant tendency to right and preserve itself;—[and ought] not to be rudely and ignorantly interfered with. I should regard this as the leading excellence, perhaps, of any Constitution. Yet here it is that your "Reformers" renounce their allegiance, and yet dare to call themselves the only loyal subjects of the cause. Confound them!—

*February 24.*

[100.]—Parliament, "par excellence," and every constituted and experienced body in its degree and way, [is] a sort of standing dictionary of know-

ledge and wisdom. Ready for each occasion as it comes about.

*March 6.*

[101.]—The true value of any House of Commons or of Lords is perhaps best sought, not in the speaking, but the silent members. As a court of justice is to be estimated more by the conduct of judges and juries than of the Bar.

[102.]—The great loss and disadvantage resulting from the cry of public distress,—when, more or less unreal,—(as I shrewdly suspect it at present,)—is the check thus given to all the more elegant improvements,—to the progress of taste and purchase of national collections and so forth,—which I believe of all possible expenditures the most useful in the long-run to the public at large.

I suspect the cry is plebeian and democratical and has more of [interested] policy than any other ingredient in its composition.

We shall lose the Edinburgh Parthenon grant; and miss the purchase of Sir T. Lawrence's drawings, in consequence of the present growls.

*April 10.*

[103.]—Perhaps it may be said in general, that it requires a larger and more accurate sight to apprehend the advantages of seeming imperfec-

tions and abuses, restraints and sacrifice, than to detect and expose [the disadvantages of] the same. Or, as \* \* expressed it yesterday—"to be a conscientious and reasonable Tory than a Whig"—a supporter [or Conservative] than a Reformer.

*April 20.*

[104.]—Read 2. Burke, p. 328 to 344. The close of, 'Thoughts on the Present Discontents.'—This evening's portion I have read with a great deal of interest and useful instruction. I never so well understood the merits of party connexion before.—Perhaps one might suggest, in addition, that, "*cæteris paribus*," a connexion, whose bond is virtue and their object pure, will always hold best together. And "a converso" we may sometimes infer that a Party which holds well together, is united by the confidence which virtuous men, in pursuit of virtuous objects, can alone maintain,—at least for a length of time and through difficult circumstances.

The statement is beautiful which relates to the exception or escape in certain instances.—[Top of p. 339, vol. 2. Burke's Works, Edit. 1826.]

*June 16.*


[105.]—Read a few pages of [Dr.] Chalmers on Endowments, (to page 123,) with large and serene interest. I know not any one circumstance

which affords me equal or more substantial satisfaction, than the sincerity of my admiration of [our] Church matters as they are [in England and Scotland], both statistical and moral. The feeling is closely allied to affection.

[106.]—At p. 128 of Chalmers, and looking to note l.,—it seems clear enough to me that the key to these passages, and indeed to the main gist of the Doctor's argument, is to be found in this circumstance: that great part of religion,—perhaps the essential and characteristic part,—consists in self-abstraction, denial, or sacrifice; in the very teeth and in spite of a constant, native, obstinate, universal and [all but] irradicable tendency or bias the other way; viz., to selfishness of every shape and grade. Religion is the corrective of the native and inherent selfishness of our nature. No wonder, then, if an [endowed] Establishment be essential towards its due propagation and support. We have thus the wisdom and interests of one generation acting on another, and without the first being altogether and, as it were, personally affected; and we know how much better any man can prescribe severe and wholesome discipline to another, than follow it himself.

*July 26.*

[107.]—Read with close and keen interest, much instruction, and unqualified approbation, from



p. 194 to p. 228, of 6. Burke, including his definitions of "the People," and various sketches of his conception of civil government and compact. A chapter, I conceive, pregnant with large, comprehensive, orthodox wisdom, political and moral.

*August 18.*

[108.]—The danger of the recent French example ["Three Days of July"], though quite inapplicable here in England, will be enhanced by success, and moderate counsels on the part of the new government. Yet were it harsh to wish them failure and confusion, merely to save ourselves from an incidental, constructive, and consequential evil. One may fear, however, and believe sometimes, without wishing.

We shall have a tough fight of it at home these fifteen years to come. May it be a war of words and interests; not of brute force and blows!

[109.]—Sir Walter [Scott], the other day [at Abbotsford, said to me,] "Well! Of all the odd 'ferlies' which have happened in my time,—and there have been a good many,—this of the new French Revolution and its causes are the most extraordinary."

*August 19.*

[110.]—Now were the time for France to become Protestant.—I have no faith whatever in public religion without an Establishment; nor

faith in any political establishment without religion.

*August 21.*

[111.]—*Mem.*—Horatio's application of the maxim, "The King can do no wrong," in answer to my complaint of His [Majesty's un]constitutional want of dignity, and seeking or suffering popularity, with the mere Mob.—Horatio is right, as usual.—We are happily [almost] independent of the character and conduct of the individual Monarch. He can do no wrong.

*August 22.*

[112.]—For Democracy, read Demonocracy, and you will not be far from the mark.—For what is Democracy but the Devil's own reign?—The reign of selfishness and vice, in place of restraint and virtue; the reign of evil, instead of good; of what is mean, instead of what is pure and select, and tried, and informed.

All that the multitude can require is access to the upper spheres, as soon as deserved. This they have with us, and it is rather more than they ever had elsewhere. Access, and equality of rights: *i. e.*, in due and fair proportion.


[113.]—In the [Fine] Arts, and possibly elsewhere, after all, the most numerous is the most correct opinion and estimate;—or rather the most correct and refined is the most numerous. Com-



pare [the statue of] Tam O'Shanter and the Apollo. One has ten thousand votes to-day, the other ten votes for a thousand years. To this we must add ten votes for each year of the thousand past; and the Apollo carries it two to one. Moreover, Tam's votes are merely home votes,—Scotch and English Cockney,—the Apollo would carry it any day elsewhere.

And thus, through every lesser degree of merit and demerit in the [Fine] Arts, and possibly elsewhere; the best has *most* votes in the long-run, or when widely and fairly reckoned. And in these matters the suffrage is universal.

[114.]—One mighty argument against the dominion of a mob, is the extremely small portion of the body itself which thus comes into action. The largest and fiercest mob is but a minute fraction of the whole Mob Community, to say nothing whatever of their superiors, in every possible sense of the word superior. The transactions of any given mob are by no means such as their whole class would desire: on the contrary, there is a bastard species of aristocracy and the most rank despotism always brought into foul play on such occasions. And even suppose no such management by a few, the given mob, numerically told, is a fraction compared with the rest of their more peaceably disposed fellow-citizens [of the same rank].




Every other species of dominion is more or less representative, and consequently more truly extensive.

The King is, perhaps, the most popular part of our Constitution.

[115.]—Exactly as our confidence in some men on some topics would make us trust and applaud what they approve, so should the praise of certain other men make us suspect, if not entirely distrust and condemn, whatever they approve. The delight of such men as Cobbett in the recent French revolution ought, of itself, to put honest men and respectable Christians on their guard.

[116.]—A few men on a few topics I would trust rather than my own opinion, supposing us possessed of equal means of information, cultivated with equal care. There are many men on almost all topics whom I would trust far beyond my own opinion, supposing us,—as will always necessarily happen with the vast majority of topics,—not to be possessed of equal means of information or cultivated with equal care.

[117.]—It is not only from their small number, in proportion to the whole, that a Mob dominion is to be objected to, but from their exerting so small a portion of the real strength of the Community;



and thus counteracting the grand political principle that might is right: as sure every whit as the converse "right is might;" indeed, in many senses a convertible proposition; the only stable basis of a Commonwealth.

[118.].—A limited Monarchy [is] the only true republic.

[119.].—Loyalty, like Religion, teaches us to look to something above and beyond our narrow selves.

*August 23.*

[120.].—Democracy, or Demonocracy, is the predominance of the principle of evil instead of the principle of good; of the Devil instead of God; of selfishness instead of sacrifice; [of pride and self-sufficiency and insubordination, instead of Christian humility and due deference to authority;] of vice, instead of virtue.

It is right in the teeth of the very first principles of all good government, whose end, both at the beginning and now, was and is to restrain, for the common benefit of all, the selfishness and presumption of each, and to keep men and things in their legitimate places duly earned.


My faith in our Constitution is so great as to make me fear no [permanent] change of moment.

*August 25.*

[121.]—Most matters in Politics and Economy, at all events in public or Political Economy, will best regulate themselves. The proper objects of Government [besides the national defence] are rather those matters of refinement, discipline, and virtue, which people require to be taught and held to: Education,—the Fine Arts,—Morals;—and, above all, Religion.

*August 26.*

[122.]—If I must acknowledge a vague, secret wish that things may not go well in France, I must also protest that my reason for so uncharitable a feeling is fear of the example elsewhere, if even tolerably successful there. Fear that the apparent and temporary success of a government, without religion and without morality, may lead to their neglect or sacrifice in other and far happier quarters. \* \* \* \* \*  
No government or country can be stable, unless where the real power of the aggregate state is uppermost. “*Might*” is truly “*right*”; and “*right*” no more nor less than “*might*.” It is precisely because Democracy is any thing but a true exertion or exhibition of the real power, physical as well as moral, of any state, that I so much distrust its policy or stability. Precisely because



such a Constitution as our own gives fair and true scope to [*all*] the powers in the state, that I depend upon its endurance, and worship its genuine fabric. It has come to this by lapse of time, free discussion, and the consequent perpetual adjustment and re-adjustment of all the parts and interests of the state.

So truly, indeed, that I have little fear either from external or internal causes.

*August 27.*

[123.]—The stability and efficiency of every Constitution is probably in strict proportion with the true adjustment of its forces or powers, physical and moral, or physico-moral. These [*powers*] are in many respects inseparable and undistinguishable. What, for instance, shall we term the force of an army with an able general? Physical or moral?—What shall we term the force of a body of faithful tenants or servants, headed by a wise [*and kind*] master? Physical or moral?—In fact, we may consider all forces of the same sort in many or most respects, and estimate the [*small*] moral force of a mob on the same principles as we should estimate the physical force of a well-disciplined body.


My position is, that the stability and efficiency of any country depends on the degree of truth and

accuracy with which the powers of the state are possessed by the hands which can wield [them] most effectually. I say nothing at all, [at present], about right, or title, or justice, or usage, or refinement, or virtue.

[124.]—The distribution of power according to the real forces in a state.—Will that answer our purpose?—That is, the distribution of the active and efficient forces according to the real existing strength. Shall we say, then, the nominal according to the real? No. But the real according to the real; no matter what or where the nominal: at least, no very great matter. Enough if the nominal be near enough the real and true, proper and fair, distribution to admit readily of the adjustment.

All this may be to place sheer force too high. At any rate, it is not placing sheer force too low.

[125.]—Read 6. Burke, pp. 258 to 267. The close of the appeal from the new to the old Whigs. The whole of this appeal I have read with instruction and interest, especially the latter half.\* \* At p. 261 and top of 262, I had been reminded of two analogies before coming to the express reference to one of them, at p. 265: namely, the higher walks and works of the Fine Arts; and the



Christian system of morals and religion, as embodied in the Church of England.

[How] fearful to think that the Cartoons and the Vatican are within reach of a furious mob; not less fearful to think that the fabric of our exquisite and inestimable Constitution is hardly less within the reach of their desperation and ignorance and brutality.

O yes!—Far less.—

[126.]—The event seems pretty nearly to justify the obnoxious Ordinances, by proving that France [was] on the verge of a revolution beforehand: for how otherwise could things have gone as they have gone?

The blame and bloodshed lies, in the first instance, at all events, with the rebellious resisters of the constituted authorities; the Mob were no fit judges of their legality, nor were the right means taken to impeach the measures and their authors. I can believe both King and Ministers to have been quite conscientious; to have had no views but those of the general good; and what is more, perhaps, to have been right in their estimate of that good. There was wanting a strong arm and clear head to manage the bold attempt.

*August 28.*

[127.]—The best security for the “Regenerate French” doing something good, reasonable and steady, is the fact of their being very much in the right. The mere use of such a plea, with some show of justice, is itself a tower of strength; as the opposite consciousness is a sure source of weakness and disorder. Still have I little or no confidence in their doing well: if, as seems generally admitted, they have no religion and few morals,—with a growing Democracy.

[128.]—Another hope for the French is that they have now conquered their own rights, instead of receiving them either at the hand of a friend or foe. Louis was *thrust* upon them; and he *gave* them a Charter.

*August 29.*

[129.]—The system of expediency judged of by the individual may serve well with such a giant as [the Duke of] Wellington, whether he judge of general expediency, or that of the particular case before him, or both. What Party does, is to supply to lesser minds, either in their own opinions lesser or in the estimation of others, a substitute for the Giant’s power of thought and action.

The end, both virtual and ostensible, of every



Party is still the same expediency; only that in Party, not the individual but the body,—nor yet any one generation, but several generations of the body, are judges of what is or is not expedient.

What is generally called a government of expediency is a dangerous, or at least a bold resource. We could not well look for any other under such a veteran as the Duke. If we had him at all, we must have had him in his own way.

But this won't answer for his successors; unless as a party on the Wellington principles; and that is quite another matter.\*

[130.]—If any way creditable to the French Mob, the late Revolution was disgraceful to her soldiery. So that account is pretty well balanced. The Ministers were quite wrong to attempt what they could not execute.

*August 30.*

[131.]—In matters of historical anticipation people are apt to mislead themselves by expecting a recurrence of particulars; whereas it is only the

[\* Note of 1839.—In consequence of some incidental circumstances which I don't feel entitled to detail, towards the close of last year and beginning of the present, 1839, I have come to see good reason for modifying many of my previous notions in regard to the Duke of Wellington's principles of administration in 1829, and ever since.]

*general* principles of human nature and the *general* course of events that hold on with uniformity sufficient to afford substantial ground for reasoning and conduct. Without a due perception of this distinction, and its careful application, a politician is better without any minute historical knowledge. Politics have more to do with Philosophy than with History:—more to do with the natural history of the animal “Man,” than with the record of his past adventures. What aids Philosophy may glean from History is quite another part of the question.

[132.]—I see quoted from a French paper a position I have often expounded to \* \* \* and elsewhere: “France has learned by experience that liberty should be *acquired*, not *given*.” I have no faith in any rights, not achieved [or extorted.] Probably on the principle, of might being the only right in Politics, and perhaps, every where else, or in most other quarters. One would think me a Democrat! I have a *very* different meaning.

*September 1.*

[133.]—In the grand distribution of power in a state, physical and moral, and of that mixed and most important sort which consists in the moral direction of physical force, the rich and

wise and great may be considered in one sense as the trustees and delegates of the whole Community. In proportion to their selfish or generous performance of their trust so is their [own] security; in proportion to the virtue, charity, true refinement of the upper classes, so is their deserved and certain legitimate influence over all the rest. Such is my conception of the social compact. It has been formed without express stipulation in any quarter; and will ever continue to adjust itself without express, at least without effectual interference from any quarter. It is grounded and consists in the nature of Man and his resources; his capabilities, and wants, and powers. The distribution of virtue is an index and key to the distribution of power. And all virtue is some shade or shape of self-denial and [self-] command.

[134.]—There is just exactly all the difference in the world,—all the difference that the opposition of terms admits of,—between “self-government,” in the [North] American sense of the word, and “self-command” [in the English, philosophical and truly Christian sense];—the one is indulgence,—the other sacrifice: one is the essential principle, ingredient, and guide to virtue, and so to happiness, public and domestic; the other exactly

opposite to all this in its nature, tendencies, and effects. One is the [pervading and characteristic] principle of Aristocracy, or rather of our own mixed and admirable Constitution : the other is the [selfish and anti-Christian] principle of Democracy, in which this due [and happy and healthy] subordination of ranks and objects is destroyed.

*September 4.*

[135.]—Reports of the Duke of Wellington's resignation. An ominous idea ; but the course of events must roll on. Clouds gather from the Horizon to the Zenith. We must all hold ourselves in readiness for the storm.

[136.]—I should be willing enough to discuss a point, even to argue, with a person who agreed with me in general in regard to the class of topics concerned ; for then there might be some chance of correcting an error on his part or my own, and reducing the point to consistency with our general views ; but never should I now think of arguing, or even of long discussing anything with a general opponent. I would, for instance, discuss a political point with a Tory ; never with a Whig [or Radical] ; and so forth : I being a Tory. And so with other matters.

[137.]—Never argue with a person who [entirely] differs from you.

*September 10.*

[138.]—"The greatest happiness of the greatest number:" [granted!] that *were* the political problem. Probably this *were* an identical proposition with "the most perfect freedom of the greatest number." And this again *were* not only compatible with a multitude of restraints and duties—"whose service is perfect freedom",—but actually and essentially dependent on such checks, and mutual service, and dependence.

So far as I yet know, or have been able to conceive, the British Constitution [in Church and State], as at present in operation, *has* made the truest approximation of any system, hitherto put in practice, towards this end and aim; nearer and truer, perhaps, than any assignable; nearer than could have been conceived "*à priori*;" nearer than could be expected [to result] from any intentional change; though, possibly, not nearer than the system is still capable of elaborating of itself, if duly and anxiously preserved: preserved from all express and purposed change whatever. Such is my present creed, and likely to remain so: a creed which has grown by degrees, and gathered strength at every fresh acces-

sion of knowledge and reflection : like my creed in yet higher matters than any which Politics regards. It is deliberately and expressly as the [humble] champion and advocate of true freedom that I advance, and hope to follow forth, these doctrines ; it is because I conscientiously believe there is *less* freedom in those other systems which usurp the name of "liberality."

*September 11.*

[139.]—It is only in a free country that one can safely,—I mean truly,—learn anything [directly] in public or political economy : here [almost] everything is a useful lesson.

*September 29.*

[140.]—Religion ; Politics ; the higher walks of Art : these three especially ought to be considered as beyond the range of individual criticism and judgment. Each is too comprehensive, too intricate, too practical, too much depending on long and complex reasoning and trial to be safely trusted, in almost any respect, to the judgment of any individual mind whatever ; that is to say, of any mind which takes not into its counsels all attainable aids from authority and ability, recent and remote. In these topics, sheer authority

should stand for much ; and deference is wisdom. Sect, Party, School—these are the shapes and names under which the authorities in each department are ranged ; each with its peculiar dangers and disadvantages, as well as its peculiar checks and aids.

And what is more, in these quarters,—wherever else besides,—not only is individual judgment to be distrusted, but the decision of each single country and generation. As in the natural and geological world, so in the moral ; not any single country, nor any age, is to be trusted by itself for evidence of the truth and the right.

It is thus, among other ways, that genuine humility [or self-distrust] becomes the safest and surest basis of confidence and power. The proud man, at the very best, is but a weak and ignorant *individual*.

[141.]—In sequence of the above Jotting, I would [thus interpret the strange and almost profane expression] “*Vox populi vox Dei* ;”—The voice of mankind is [one] language in which it seems to have pleased God to make known his will to Man. The exercise of each generation of faculties, all over the world, checked and assisted by all that have gone before : such is the collective voice of mankind ; the genuine “*Vox populi*.”

And in proportion to the delicacy [extent] and


difficulty of each topic is there the more necessity for a wide appeal to authority and intellect beyond our own narrow range :—[as Shakspeare has it “ Beyond] the ignorant present !”—And in all such topics the opinion of successive generations has been expressed most distinctly in the shape of deference to certain favourite authorities.

*October 2.*

[142.]—I look with large and pleasing interest from time to time at the rising “ King’s College,” a recent pillar of the Church and State. May it be prosperous !

[143.]—If the Duke consent to Parliamentary Reform, or Sir Robert Peel either, I shall both predict and desire their downfall ; I cannot believe them so injudicious ; [in the words of Dogberry] “ They are not the men I took them for.”—But such rumours begin to float about. To be sure, we know little or nothing of the matter. I hope to see both quite stanch on this vital point.

[144.]—Reform where you please besides ; but touch not the House of Commons. It is beyond the range of your amendment : better than any assignable. It is the result of ages of wisdom, and free discussion, and endless self-





adjustment, and exquisite and intricate adaptation to circumstances. It has *already* kept due pace with the times. Avoid all express and purposed tampering with such an instrument. On this sort of question I presume not to judge for myself, but from the best authorities of the *past*; and these, with the addition of my own opinion, I should prefer to any combination of existing authorities whatsoever.

[145.]—Vague impression that war is now desirable all over Europe and the world, to strengthen the hands of legitimate authority, and secure the blessings of true freedom from the vile and sacrilegious despotism of the mob. It were just as well, besides, to cut across our growing intercourse with France; the impious, immoral, revolutionary France. And just as well to bring our home parties into a wholesome predicament.

*October 7.*

[146.]—Politics, Political Economy, and some other topics, may, in certain respects, be grouped with such questions as Digestion, and many more in that region of science. They are so intensely complicated, and so practical, and, in some respects, so little understood, that a dogged, unreasoning line of thought and conduct, checked

and suggested by experience alone, both past and present, is safer and more [truly] philosophical than the most ingenious and erudite system without the large and liberal allowance of these disturbing or retarding causes. So that I would often be [almost] disposed to adopt the advice of a Politician or Economist who pretended not to assign any better reason than sheer, blind, humdrum experience, rather than the advice of one who supported all he said with [apparently] cogent and unanswerable arguments. Thus it is certainly in Medicine, or rather in the un-medical department of the physique ; in the science of health and economy of human life : unless, to be sure, the arguments and illustrations be empirically and humbly derived from sheer experience. What I should distrust in a physician,—natural or moral,—would be reasons, or rather reasonings of higher and more accurate pretension, tending to deceive either himself or others, or both, into the belief that he really comprehended *all* the process. This we assuredly know to be incorrect ; for it is [confessedly] uncomprehended at head-quarters ; and most explicitly of all by the highest and best authorities.

*October 10.*

[147.]—In Geological, Political, and, indeed, every sort of investigation, a prodigious deal

will be found to depend on where the "*onus probandi*" fairly ought to lie. More than most people seem to be aware of; more than I used to believe. In a great many instances nearly the whole matter, so far, at least, as practice and ordinary rules are concerned, will be found to depend on this single circumstance; especially where much is beyond our accurate reach, either from obscurity or complication.

The "*onus*" ought, I believe, almost always to lie with the advocate for change; not with the defender of what is usual [and established].

[148.]—Connected with the above Jotting is the great value I am inclined to repose in the system of silent voting. A man may be right, though he cannot entirely explain his reasons of conviction; and a cause right, though there be no fit advocate at hand to expound its merits. All this is helped "to-rights" by the system of silent votes. I don't mean your abominable Ballot; quite the contrary: I mean votes which shall be known, and which [fix] responsibility with the men who give them.

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

If compelled to judge by what is *said* rather than by the votes, I would attend more to the time and the tone of the Hear! Hear! than even to the words which call them forth. The Orator speaks for himself: the rest express the opinion of the assembly.

*October 12.*

[149.]—The progress is easy, and easily conceived and excused, by which a young political reasoner is first a bit of a Whig; a speculator and amender, forsooth! and eventually a good substantial Tory. It is some time before a man becomes convinced,—and the wiser and larger his views, and the more acute, the earlier will he be convinced,—that most parts of Politics are beyond the reach or range of ordinary reasoning. Sheer practice [being] often the only, and almost always the [best and] safest, guide; [the topic being] too intricate, or too evanescent, as well as too important for subjection to the most powerful and comprehensive mind depending on its own [unaided] resources.

*October 19.*

[150.]—A King of England is strong *with*, not *against* the Aristocracy. When he takes to the common people, he can neither benefit them

nor hurt the Magnates. This is a pleasant and wholesome security; and may help to keep us all in good humour.

*October 24.*

[151.]—We hear now and then of the mob, or as some folks please to say “the People,” discovering the “secret” of their strength! I believe there is no such secret, because no such strength. If there were a secret, and the strength, it would have found its due place and level long ere now. And if there be now such secret, and such strength, it will, and ought forthwith to find its due expression and place. I believe the brute strength of the “people” is exactly in the predicament of other brute strength; that of horses, for instance, or wild bears! And what is the secret of their strength? What hand or hoof could they make against the human race? Just so much, or so little, of civilization and subordination as have the people, or any portion of them, just so much or so little have they of efficient or formidable power. The question turns, not so much on the brute force of the mere mob, as on the perversity or virtue of their superiors. There is, and can be, and ought to be, no secret in the matter; that is to say, in our day and country of free discussion and truly equal

rights; of rights in due proportion, and accessible to all.


[152.]—The French [or selfish] may be truly enough termed and considered the anti-Christian system of Politics and Ethics. We have seen, and shall see, the fruits.

*October 28.*

[153.]—Every science and every art has its peculiar, strict, technical language; and at the same time, contributes and acknowledges its share towards the “lingua franca” of common parlance. The more extensively and immediately popular the topic, the more difficult to draw this line of demarcation, and the more essential to draw it. Hence half, or two-thirds, of all the fallacies current in the world; hence the “People,” at one time meaning the whole Community, at another the mere “Mob;” hence “Nature” in the [Fine] Arts, at one time meaning individual nature, at another time the general habit, or “mean” of beauty and truth.

*October 29.*

[154.]—The aristocracy of talent has its full swing and play, under the present régime, by its influence on, and over, the aristocracy of wealth



and rank. Do not these take their opinions from the men of talent in the land? Do they not expend their votes and capital at the virtual dictation of the wise of every grade?—of the architects, and authors, and painters, and economists of the day? The principle of virtual representation pervades this country vastly more extensively, and more usefully, than the nominal, and palpable, and numerical; much and usefully as that prevails.

*November 3.*

[155.]—Charming close of the Duke's speech last night! [A] death-blow, I trust, for half a century, to the question of Parliamentary Reform. The noble stout heart and clear head! Long live the Duke, and long his memory after him!

[N.B. This refers to the celebrated declaration of the Duke of Wellington against all Parliamentary Reform.]

*November 6.*

[156.]—I am not at all sure that, for his own sake, and that of the great cause, I should be sorry to see the Duke finally resign on the question of Reform. It would be to make his exit, like his whole career, of public service and valuable example. It would neutralize what was


dangerous in his [R.] Catholic concessions, and eventually check the impulse of Reform. We should all feel the loss so smartly; and the Duke's party and principles would be sure to return soon to power \* \* \* \* \*. I doubt if a better opportunity of escape will occur. The declaration of faith on the subject of Reform has served to clinch and close my political creed, both for the present, and perhaps for all my life. I am, and probably shall remain, a disciple of the Wellington school. My only misgiving is removed.

*November 9.*

[157.]—A man but a few degrees weaker than the Duke of Wellington would have gone to the City feast, for fear of being thought afraid; and, for this petty and purely personal consideration, would have risked the tranquillity of the Capital and many lives.

There is not, perhaps, any one qualification more requisite in a statesman than due disregard of what may be thought or said of his conduct or motives.

[158.]—[It is] an important and old question with me, both in Politics and everywhere else, to ascertain the point at which rules and authorities





should end, and original and individual thought for ourselves begin. A compound and intricate question, all modified by a thousand circumstances and bye-considerations. The Tory, in almost all things, who yet thinks for himself even in his choice of that creed, has, perhaps, the best chance of any to be right and true. But then, it may be said, I judge with partiality, for such I pretend is my own description. Granted. But I have [freely and deliberately] made this selection with the very view of hitting on truth and the right.

*November 13.*

[159.]—I am glad to see that the Duke's profession of faith, the other night, as to Reform in Parliament, has been so distinctly taken up as a cause of offence; nor should I regret his retirement on such a footing. We shall miss him sadly before long.

*November 14.*

[160.]—Of all things the most opposite to representation in Politics is equal and universal suffrage; and every approach to that, in proportion. The distinctions of rank, fortune, and so forth, are so many varieties of virtual representation. For my part, I believe the genius, or

drift, or temper, and tendency of representation, to be the true key to modern Politics and prosperity. No matter, sometimes, how indirect the representation, or how entirely opposite in appearance. Surely the reality is better than the fallacious appearance. I believe these things with us have been carried, or, rather, have carried themselves, farther towards possible perfection, than ever elsewhere, or here at any former period; and farther than any *express* attempt to alter, and improve, and re-form, or re-cast or re-model, has any chance of carrying them.

But I have faith enough to believe, that even the most rude and inconsiderate agitations and alterations which may be attempted will, in the end, leave things much as they are, or even nearer to perfection; that is, provided we hold together at all, and weather the storm.

*November 16.*

[161.]—On the whole, I feel rather glad than sorry at the immediate defeat of Ministers; so confident am I that it will unite the Tories, and teach them a wholesome lesson, and, in due and not very distant time, lead to the miserable rejection of the Whigs. I believe the present men not only conscientious but able; and very near indeed to the right mark. We shall return be-

fore long to their policy. There seems, if anything, to have been a *want* of military discipline and uncompromising vigour on the Duke's part, as if he were a little afraid of that reputation. He should never have listened to the cant of retrenchment and so forth; and should not have allowed so much latitude in their votes and opinions to his supporters. He seems to have been a little too gentle and good-natured. His speech on Parliamentary change was indeed a redeemer; but perhaps too late.

As to that Question (which is to be tried to-night), I have, after all, no great apprehension of its going too far. I think the experiment needless and dangerous, but that it will check and cure itself, before gaining much head-way. In other countries these things acquire a "momentum," which soon tears them to pieces. I believe the "inertia" of our Fly-wheels will serve its salutary purpose, and no permanent harm result.

In the mean time, I work on and on, in secret and indifference, with my own affairs; a spectator vastly independent, and confident that all is right and tight. Already I anticipate the counter-cheer and chuckle when the Whigs retire, —say two years hence;—for they will hold a little longer now than formerly. Amen!

10 P.M. [Same day.]—The Ministers have all

resigned. *The Duke and Sir Robert Peel.* No two such men in the field. No two such honest or able men :—

“*Reparabit cornua Phœbe!*”

*November 17.*

[162.]—Rather flat and drowsy; restless, yet blank and thoughtless night and morning. In spite of my philosophy and all that, a little bothered with this change of men and measures. The Duke and [Sir Robert] Peel were too good for them.

As the House of Commons to the Public at large, so is the administration to the House of Commons. A selection and a sort of mirror. What will the Reformers say to all this business? It surely vindicates the House, at least, from undue ministerial influence; and, by their own showing, *demonstrates* the healthiness of the present system, and the absence of all need of Reform. Yet it is for the avowal of that truth that the Duke retires! The Duke will never return; but his policy and his friends will, ere long.

*November 19.*

[163.]—I am not sorry at these Ministerial changes, and for this reason: I believe the Coun-

try,—in my own sense of that term, and not mere numbers,—have decided against the late Administration : I believe the Country very much mistaken in this respect ; and that they will find this before long ; but that their prejudice was so strong that nothing short of experience was able to correct it : I believe the present shift only one of several steps or stages towards the restoration of such men as [Sir Robert] Peel to public confidence and power. It is a roundabout way, but not the less speedy and certain on that account. I believe that the public opinion, in the large and genuine sense of the word “ public,” is less likely to err than the opinion of most individuals, perhaps less than the opinion of any individual whatever (though this may be doubted). Still is that public opinion liable to error. It is, perhaps, more ready than most individuals are to correct its mistakes, and admit,—by the only voice the Monster is possessed of,—its votes and actions,—how much it was mistaken. Such is the present aspect of affairs to my [purblind] optics.

*November 21.*

[164.]—As in the [Fine] Arts, so, probably, elsewhere, the best doings of all must be without effort or its appearance. The effort is, then, in the discipline of learning how to do [well].


[165.]—On second or third thoughts, I am more and more satisfied with the recent retirement of our Ministry. Of course I speak my own sheer opinions, be their weight or worth what it may;—I believe that the late Ministers were right and true.—Truth and the right must emerge and triumph soon. Perhaps the very shortest way to the trial and clear decision of this question was that which *they* (the late Ministers) have selected. Nothing short [of that] would have convinced the Country of their [own] error. In the time and mode of their retreat they have shown good tactics. I respect them heartily and unreservedly still.

Had the late Ministry gone out on any error, I should have regretted it, on account of the injury to the sacred cause. But now their retirement is only a guarantee of their eventual stability; both men and measures.

\* \* \* \* \* The new order of things will not hold long. They are but a useful tool to restore and unite the public confidence in their opponents.

*November 22.*

[166.]—In present Politics I am optimist enough, in regard to our Constitution, to believe all will work well with or without the Whigs; and Tory enough to believe that the mode of its



operation will be the pretty speedy ejection of the enemy. The public has taken an indirect, but sure and short way, to convince itself of its error.

[167.]—[Observe] the nice and most intricate policy and [consummate] art of simple truth and the absence of all intrigue. Such is one of the accessary and unforeseen rewards of every virtue.

For instance; my faith in the straightforward sincerity and good intentions and good policy of the late Administration is such as to make me think they would have shrunk from indirect measures, however excellent the end and the intention, and however fair, in [what some call] a political sense, the means employed. Yet am I no less convinced that the recent and present operations at head-quarters will turn out, ere long, as if guided by the most skilful and profound political sagacity.

For the very sake of what I hold the great and good cause, I should not desire to see things otherwise. They prepare but the more lasting and sure triumph for the Constitutional Tory party.

*November 28.*

[168.]—I have faith enough in our Constitution to believe these projected Reforms will do no harm; probably some good—*provided their*

*farther progression be effectually checked.\** We can bear a good deal without injury, permanent or immediate. If certain measures be carried, they will be right: or their remedies will be right; were it for no other reason than that they are capable of being carried or recalled. But this has its limits, viz., where the self-preserving principle is undermined and gradually lost, viz., where the existing order of things is essentially perverted.

I believe the whole an entirely needless and tolerably dangerous experiment. All the more so that there is no harm or danger in the earlier steps of the progress.

My sacred rule both is and shall be to consent to the "minimum" of change, and abide as much and as long as possible by what we have found to answer well,—in a topic beyond the comprehension not only of any single mind on earth, but of any single age and its best ornaments! Of inconceivable intricacy, delicate adjustment, and difficulty. O ye profane and presumptuous Reformers!

Nor is there room for the retort. There is no presumption in *defending* on such grounds as these.

\* [Not in Italics or underlined in the original MS.; otherwise verbatim throughout.]



*November 30.*


[169.]—In Politics, as in Watch-making [and Gun-making], and many more instances, cheapness is often, if not generally, delusive and short-sighted. The evil may long be latent, but there it lurks, and it will tell in an evil hour, and when least well to be afforded.

*December 1.*

[170.]—No man, probably, is an enemy to Freedom, or Reform, or, at any rate, absurd enough to avow his hostility. But there [is] a difference between change and Reform; and a difference between genuine Freedom and what some folks proclaim as such. It is as an advocate of the reformed and free that I, for my part, would oppose much farther change. I believe it one of the prime excellencies of our Constitution that it is fully capable of working its own amendment, as often and as much as the times may come to require, without the rude and ignorant interference of State Quacks.

*December 3.*

[171.]—I should be tempted to look upon an opposition,—and the more factious and unreasonable, perhaps, the better,—as a very consider-



able advantage to any Government ; and its absence as a loss.

To return a triumphant answer is always an advantage to a party ; and to carry the right. This all implies opposition *and* unreason.

I believe the present men will find the truth of this. Sir Robert and the Duke will never stoop to factious opposition.

*December 5.*

[172.]—One's first impression on seeing such a man as Sir Robert Peel out of office is regret that the Country should lose the services of him and others of the like kidney ; and that a coalition and selection of the reigning and choicest spirits of each age should not be pressed into the vessel of the State. But a little more reflection will convince us that the union is neither very possible nor at all desirable. The services of these men are useful in Opposition, whether to thwart the wrong or strengthen the right in power. It is important that there be always clever and honest men in Opposition : it is useful to good Ministers, and terrible to the incompetent or vicious. It is useful to the Country in every view. It is useful both to the Country and to Ministers that they be checked and forced from doing wrong ; worried and corrected : and

if right, applauded on every side. Powerful and just opposition,—and even unjust (and then less powerful),—is like the uses of adversity, and bears in it a precious jewel, however ugly and venomous it may appear.

I should never dream of or recommend in future a Coalition Ministry, for the sake of turning to best account the talents of the time. They are best arranged as generally heretofore.

*December 7.*

[173.]—In many political points,—perhaps in most,—I should say, “Argue as you please, and force me to confess myself convinced;—still I should answer—Nay. For the topic is beyond my reach of adequate investigation and judgment. I would not trust my own individual opinion or experience, in opposition to established usage well hammered into shape. My opinion, or your opinion, is little or nothing in comparison. My reason, so far as it sees or goes, may be entirely with you; but a still larger view convinces me both of us may be wrong. The thing is out of our reach. The use I choose to make of my reason in such matters is, to distrust my own immediate impression,—and yours;—when opposed or not confirmed by precedent.”

*Dec. 10.*

[174.]—Idea this morning: To get up a scale of “Political equivalents,” on the same principle or plan with Dr. Wollaston’s for Chemistry. A sliding scale, with all the gradations of political words on one portion, and all the shades of party on the other. Thus, to reach the true value and meaning of any given phrase in the mouth of a given man or paper:—“Economy,” “Freedom,” “Virtue,” and so forth:—“The Constitution,” “Reform,” “Retrenchment,” all have different meanings in different mouths. Perhaps a device of this sort might serve for a page of “John Bull.”—Perhaps of more serious use and import. So for [the vocabulary *of*] morals: political economy; and the rest.

[175.]—Things cannot be made to stand still. Let us but strive to regulate their progress cautiously and firmly.

*Dec. 11.*

[176.]—In Politics, [I am] glad to perceive the “identification” principle at work in both directions. The Duke renouncing, and the new Chancellor of Exchequer claiming, kindred with the reigning French. May the Ministry live as long as those they admire!

*Dec. 18.*

[177.]—In Parliamentary life and debate, the idea recurs to me with fresh force that the true and potential Opposition [line] is to support [Ministers] when [they are] right, and heartily. There will, “*ex hypothesi*,” remain enough of supposed error for opposition; or the adversary takes up your views and renounces his own; or he goes out.

*Dec. 19.*

[178.]—It is well to know [that it is] the Tories, albeit by their folly, [who] have brought these times and things about; for it shows they have the real power to use, as well as thus to abuse: [Viz., by their unseasonable and suicidal dissension from the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel].

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*January 2, 1831.*

[179.]—Granting, for argument, what I am not disposed to admit on any other terms, that every country in Europe will soon be revolutionized, and turned upside down, after the illustrious ex-

ample of France; what, I would ask, has this to do with our own affairs at home?—They profess [abroad]—and possibly with some sincerity, whatever be the truth,—to have only imitated England, and only to desire an approximation to our happy state.

Is that a reason why we [in England] should wish to change?

*January 10.*

[180.]—It were so evidently for the advantage of the reigning powers in France to assimilate themselves with the old establishments in Europe, instead of encouraging fresh distractions, that I should not be altogether surprised to see them adopt and perhaps succeed in pursuing that policy, just as Napoleon wished to identify his own title and dynasty with those of the other nations. At least, such was his true policy; and at one period, I believe, it was sincerely followed. The French have now a King, and a Court of their own selection; and are freed from the injurious disgrace of an imposed one. They have possibly learned something, too, from recent demonstrations of the Sovereign Mob.

[181.]—It is needless lamenting this or that in Politics or elsewhere. We seldom see far enough or broadly enough to estimate rightly

all the bearings of a great question. Public opinion is liable to err, for a time,—perhaps nearly as much as the better sort of private opinion,—more so than the best;—and its errors must be righted on similar terms,—often at the cost of painful experience. We are now paying the least price essential for having distrusted the Duke of Wellington,—the durance vile of a Whig administration. The French and the Belgians are now paying their prices down.

It is idle to talk of so and so [as what] *would have been* in time, or too late, or so forth.—Would have been!—There's a tense no mortal has any right to use in almost any circumstances; especially in those of magnitude and intricacy and public concernment. It is difficult enough, as matters actually stand, to solve the problem of cause and consequence. Shall we then complicate and involve it ten thousand fold, and thus infallibly deceive ourselves?

“The Times” says, the Prince of Orange’s present proclamation “would have been” in time before the vote of Congress. As if the Congress and their whole abettors had not then—as still they have in part—to learn the bitter lesson of anarchy first of all! Or the French their lesson; or our [ultra] Tories, theirs.

*January 26.*

[182.]—It is the Whigs and Reformers, and not the Tories, who virtually advocate the “Wisdom of our Ancestors.” They say we have departed from that wisdom in the constitutional standard, and ought to return. By no means. Their wisdom was like our own; or somewhat less; an average and ordinary share. But time and intermediate trial has corrected and wrought into admirable shape the existing system so idly sought to be destroyed.—But such is my faith in the essential principle of that system, that [I am persuaded] whatever is done will be right in the long-run, unless the opposite notions be suddenly pushed so far as to destroy the whole machine. But one of its prime excellences is to guard us from everything sudden from any quarter whatever.

[183.]—There is something very like a “circle” in the question of public and the best private opinion. What is the best private opinion but that which is eventually sanctioned by the public voice?—What the true public voice but that of the best private opinions?—The best private authority is [at least coincident with] that which best knows how to anticipate what will eventually prove the public voice; his [? its] ground is mainly experience of the past.



*February 1.*

[184.] So the King despises painting! It is worthy of a *popular* Prince. There is no duty so peculiarly Royal or so useful in a King, as well as delightful and honourable to himself, as protection of the Fine Arts. Politics belong to Ministry; Commerce to the Merchants; but the care of the elegancies and ornaments of polished life becomes the Monarch better than his Crown.

*February 4.*

[185.]—It must not be altogether overlooked that, along with the risks and disadvantages of [Parliamentary] Reform (which I think vastly preponderate), there will come subordinate advantages likewise.

[186.]—The impression recurs at every turn, how perfect the *existing* Representation! How sympathetic and indicative even of the passing flaws of public opinion and fancied interest!—[I] listen to Mr. Henry Hunt for the first time; and observe that Mr. Jeffrey has just taken his seat.

*February 23.*

[187.]—In Politics, the Ministers have to satisfy not merely the public opinion, taken in

the largest and most legitimate and fairest sense of that expression, but they have to satisfy that public opinion in the long-run, and after the event, and judged by the event. They must be prophetic enough to foresee all this, or much of it; and brave and virtuous enough to withstand the most authoritative and extensive impulses of the moment, when opposed to their own conviction of what is right. Such is the ordeal. Such is the problem. And nothing but wisdom and virtue in the Leaders can secure their eventual triumph. The Public must of all things be defended against themselves: their true and permanent interests against their momentary desire: their faith and virtue against their cupidity and alarms.

*February 27.*

[188.]—[Speaking generally] What is the leading distinction between a Whig and Tory? —The difference in their “*manière de voir et de penser.*”—The Whig thinks for himself in almost all things. The Tory is glad to press the thoughts of others and their experience into his service. The Tory may think quite as much for himself as the Whig; but not quite so much of himself and by himself. He chooses to exert his privilege of thinking by calling to his aid the opinions of others in addition, correction, or corro-

boration of his own ; whether in Politics, in Religion, or elsewhere. Surely this is as real an exertion of freedom as any other. It is his *choice* thus to cross-examine and guide and guard his own thoughts and actions. There is much of willing service in perfect freedom.

[189.]—The analogy is true and useful between the Fly-wheel [of a machine] and the ballast of a ship : both a sheer loss of power ; both a security from impulse ; both impulsive.

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## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM BILL TILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL REJECTION BY THE HOUSE OF LORDS, BY A MAJORITY OF 41; ON 7TH OCTOBER, 1831.

*March 1, 1831.*

[190.]—In half an hour the Reform debate will begin; the cauldron has been a-boiling all day.

[191.]—In the second and third editions of the “*Courier*” is an outline of Lord John Russell’s proposed Bill. Some people will call this brave in the Ministers. It might have been more brave to do and dare what they believed the right;—supposing that different from this proposal.

*March 2.*

[192.]—I believe the Whig Ministers are acting more in self-defence than from what they believe for the public good, and perhaps will be glad to escape back to their old trenches of opposition, under cover of such a flourish as the present. We have already seen what a mess

they make of changes, for the sake of change. We shall weather all the storm, not with their help, but in spite thereof. It seems to me vastly idle to change: but we can bear even change within certain limits, and yet survive; and soon virtually return to things much as they are, and were, and ought to be.

[193.]—I have just read through the greater part of Lord John Russell's speech.

He seems entirely to blink what, to my mind, has ever been the vital objection [to Parliamentary Reform]—the needless risk of imparting the "momentum" of change, and so leading on and on to further innovations.

Much of Lord John's proposition seems very reasonable, or, rather, very good reasoning. But there's the rub. Are we to prefer reasoning to experience? It is the grand pervading test by which to distinguish between the Whig and Tory. Are we to prefer the conscientious, and ingenious, and eloquent opinions of Lord John, or all the Ministers, to the dogged, practical, happy experience of time and successful trial; and, better still than all of these, of gradual adaptations to the successively existing circumstances of our history and interests?

Much of the plan is reasonable, if reasoning be better than experience.

I would be willing to concede the whole of this and more, in return or exchange, if that were possible, for some compensation in the form of a decided check to further progress ; or rather for a decided, however slight, tendency the very opposite way. I believe this is the shape in which all great public questions, once [fully] agitated, ought to be compromised. A present concession balanced, "per contra," by a check or tendency in the opposite direction ; as in the instance of the Catholic relief and the forty-shilling disfranchisement.

[194.]—All defence, nearly, is and ought to be flat and tame in comparison with the spirit and vigour of attack and innovation. Perhaps this is no more than fair and equal, to counteract the vantage-ground of possession, and put the sides of an argument on their own merits respectively. We need not expect much from the anti-reformists but stale prose. To be sure, when a good cause is really in danger, and is even pushed from its vantage-ground and like to perish, there do rise up a host of sentiments and powers unfelt, because unrequisite, before, and full of all eloquence.

[195.]—[In general] the approbation of change

is rashness and presumption; the approbation of established things, modesty and wisdom.

*March 3.*

[196.]—If we defend Lord John Russell's Bill on the ground of its plausibility and occasional confessed improvements, or what seem such, both in theory and practice, we sanction the most dangerous of all political doctrines, that of changing whatever appears or may be demonstrated absurd and inconsistent *in name and aspect*. Admit such a rule, and what shall stand?

[197.]—I never feared, directly, those who wished to effect either a radical or a partial change in our Constitution, but rather those who wheedled themselves into the idea that Reform would serve to *restore* and invigorate the old. This Measure will help to undeceive all such political reasoners, and to unite the true men. Hence a salutary reaction [before long].

[198.]—Perhaps all variety of modes of election is essential to the perfect representation of all the interests of an [extensive] Community.—See our working Constitution.

*March 6.*

[199.]—It may be well that the present House of Commons [should] be guarded against the folly and horrors of “The self-denying ordinance.” —(*See the early French Revolution.*) They have no *right* to sacrifice themselves: they are trustees. The Constitution is in their charge only for a time, and in a limited degree. No more than the King has a right to give up his privileges, or the Chancellor his etiquettes and patronage. These are but tenants of a day or two. *We* are all parties concerned as well as they. I have an interest in the dignity of the Crown almost as real as the King’s: it is one of my individual rights, and protections, and privileges. Interfere with it, and you touch “*me*.”—“*me*” being any given man or given million in the realm [“however mean or high.”]

[200.]—The merit of true consistency is great in proportion to the risk of misconstruction and reproach; especially on a change of opinions and line of conduct. It may require the greatest character of all to carry a man through such a trial; but, if successful, it is the greatest triumph of the greatest character. Such I believe —’s and such his eventual, and not very distant reward.



*March 8.*

[201.]—So far as I can gather, the Close-Borough members are judging this Reform question too much as a personal one, whether against or for it. It is by no means their own concern, one way or other. I have a right—anybody has a right—to see our excellent and tried system maintained. The mere individual members for the time being have comparatively little to do with the question as it affects themselves: they should consider how it affects the Constitution. “A la bonne heure,” I hear the Reformer cry. “Would [that] all would act up to that notion!” I repeat, “Would that they would!” I rather apprehend the opposite tendency and risk; and that many will vote against their own personal interests and wishes, forgetting that they thus sacrifice the public welfare likewise. They are trustees for the public. Mr. S—’s anecdote alarms me more than anything I have yet heard. A friend of his, now twelve years in Parliament for a Close Borough, attending night after night, “in vain wishing to be persuaded to vote against the Bill! wishing to discover good reasons for opposing it.”

[202.]—To be sure, there is the House of Lords to defend the Commons against themselves, and so preserve the Constitution; which is mine and


yours, [and every body's] paramount to all their interests, and both their Houses.

[203.]—One great argument against change, except for practical evils, and by practical remedies [applied by practical men], lies here, that there is no end whatever to the redress of theoretical evils. The practical, however, measures itself.

[204.]—In things venerable and useful we may often [and long] preserve, but [almost] never can restore. We cannot *return* to the days of Chivalry and the earlier Church, but we may preserve our enjoyment of their advantages.

[205.]—The nearly perfect condition of our present and recent Representation, in the large and varied sense of that term, is the grand argument, after all, against any purposed change.

And should the worst come to the worst, that very principle will greatly help to right matters again. All real powers and interests will, before long, come again to be duly, though often indirectly, represented in Parliament,—ay, in the House of Commons,—unless things proceed so far as utterly to destroy the working of our State machine. Its tendency is perpetually thus:—



genuine representation of all interests and powers however indirectly,—under whatever name.

*March 9.*

[206.]—Perhaps there would never be a violent revolution in this or any country were the parties first concerned—I mean first in order of time—[fully] aware of what was to succeed. They begin the movement, or lend it force, and repent when too late. Were all the parties most concerned aware of what they are about just now, I should have no fears on the score of Reform or Revolution; nor have I many or much, as it is.

[207.]—The prime duty of all, perhaps, in a Government is to defend the People against themselves; of course, not at the risk merely, but certain loss of popularity, from time to time, and until judged by the event. Permanent, or rather eventual and substantial popularity is among the safest of our standards to judge of right or wrong: it is often, perhaps generally, opposed to, and inconsistent with, present and immediate popularity; for public virtue, like private virtue, is essentially difficult and disagreeable in the first instance, and at the moment of effort. People

don't like, till afterwards, those who force them to do right, any more than they afterwards like those who allow them to do wrong.

[208.]—To the “Petition argument,” in any case, I would oppose the greater mass who do not petition; 100 or 1000 or more to 1.

*March 10.*

[209.]—“The union of opposite qualities” [as a characteristic of the highest excellence] will apply to things as well as men: to our most excellent Constitution, for instance. To combine the opposite qualities of sensibility and steadiness is amongst the number.

Claudio says the bill will not pass. I think it may in the House of Commons; and be thrown out by their Lordships.

But what do either of us know about it? Not much; yet, perhaps, as much as most others.

[210.]—If,—as I believe almost entirely,—the House of Commons has heretofore been everything or nearly everything in the State, it must have been so, because of its complete representation of *all* the interests and powers in the State. Change this, and perhaps you only shift the

*aspect* of things. The influences thus interfered with will find their expression and exertion elsewhere.

I am not sure if this notion involves a fallacy or not.

*March 13.*

[211.]—What are the tests and organs of genuine public opinion?—Is not this problem among the greatest of all political difficulties; and the particular mechanism by which public opinion is ascertained and brought to bear of itself a very great portion of any particular Constitution?—Of our own pre-eminently?

Convince me of the genuine Public Opinion on the public interests, and I shall be ready to assent cheerfully to any Reform of any amount or shape thus sanctioned.—What *is* the public opinion on this or any other point?—There's the rub.—I am convinced no mechanism has yet been thought of,—far less constructed and put into actual and varied and long-continued operation,—none has yet been conceived, or devised, or hit on, or secured, by half so just and true as our “ancien régime.” Nay,—were there any device by which the genuine public opinion at any given moment could with certainty be ascertained on such a question as the present, I should still adhere,

and say,—Show me what will *continue* to be this public opinion a year hence or twenty years. Such is my notion of genuine Public Opinion; and the best Organ yet discovered for its expression and enforcement—(often in spite of itself at idle or angry moments)—is our old and well-tried and hard-earned system of government.


But you would improve it, and make the good still better.

I repeat I should have no objection, if I knew how, with certainty or decent probability, to do so; or if you could by any means show me the public voice *deliberately* and *permanently* consenting to a change. You cannot by possibility show this. Therefore I adhere.

Others may be satisfied with your evidence as to what is the genuine public wish; let them clamour for Reform.

I take the public *interests* and their genuine deliberate and *permanent wishes* to be identical. Not always their wishes of the moment, however genuine and widely entertained and clearly expressed.

Our Constitution defends us not only against our enemies both foreign and domestic, but against ourselves. Yet such is the system these \* \* \* Whigs desire and dare to tamper with! I trust their disgrace may be the very first effect of the national reaction.



[212.]—One of the peculiar dangers and difficulties of such great questions lies in this, that their operation can seldom be fairly ascertained, even by the event; they admit of neither confutation nor of confirmation, till too long afterwards for remedy. In the mean time, we may be sapping the foundations of our prosperity.

There is nothing I should dread more about "Reform" than the success with which it would work in the first instance. "See what a triumphant answer to the old-womanish prosing of the opponents of this great and salutary measure!"—Then for another step;—another,—and another,—and another!

*March 14.*

[213.]—Could we, by any assumed means different from those secured by our Constitution, and better, arrive at an accurate knowledge of the great and public interest and will at any given moment; could we moreover suppose that the public *wish* at any moment is the best guide to indicate the public *interest*; still I should ask, Are people one and all at any moment the best judges of their own *permanent* wishes or interests? Are there not authorities in philosophy and morals and economy, which oppose, for our own sakes, the immediate wishes and apparent inte-

rests of us all?—Our existing system [in Church and State] secures something very like an expression and enforcement of *this* more true and permanent public will and interest; besides being itself the best channel assignable for the conveyance, at any moment, of the general opinion. It is the best for the moment; and a great deal more besides.

The grand comfort is that the Constitution itself will be tried by this very Tribunal. It will not so much judge itself, as itself serve to ascertain the real public opinion on its merits. And if any considerable change ensue, I must confess I shall have overrated the excellence of our Constitution. I have placed myself in this dilemma. Either some change is requisite and right; or our system is able to resist it.

[214.]—In Politics [and elsewhere] there is a “circle”—(I would rather call it a virtuous than a vicious circle)—here, that public opinion, in the long-run, most truly, and on the whole, is best learned by consulting the opinions of the best and wisest men; and those men are best and wisest whom the public opinion pronounces so.

*March 16.*

[215.]—The essential characteristic of our





Constitution, or one of its characteristic features, is the "through-other" distribution of the powers and interests and influences that be. The tendency of the New Bill would be so far to interfere with this, and for what object? For the sake of mere words and *grammatical* consistency; because the House is *called* the House of *Commons*; the members, Representatives; their Bill, Reform; the close Boroughs, *rotten*—and so forth.

I should apprehend little from the New Bill except its tendency to farther and farther changes. I do not believe its operation would [permanently] diminish the power of the Crown or of the Aristocracy: but its ulterior consequences may or might destroy them both; and, to start with, the thing is quite gratuitous, rash, and grossly unconstitutional. I trust it may prove the ruin and disgrace of the Whigs for half a century to come.

Yet I fear, somehow, the measure still "progresses," and that it will produce no palpable harm in the first instance. So much the worse, if farther steps are to be dreaded.

[216.]—My objections to the Reform Bill are preliminary, and, I believe, insuperable. I don't go so far as to examine the details of the measure, but contend it is uncalled for, because the Consti-


tution which we have is better than *any assignable*.

[217.]—How or whence I know not, but to-day I have had at times a notion that the Reform Bill may pass and do no harm; perhaps more good than its rejection *now*. Such questions had better not be mooted; but, being stirred, a nominal, if not substantial settlement sometimes becomes expedient or inevitable. These are vague conjectures. My wishes, hopes, and fears remain unchanged.

*March 18.*

[218.]—The opinion of the multitude themselves, in the end and long-run, is the opinion of a few *at the time*.

[219.]—Glance [through] Blackwood's "Reform and Revolution" article. [Almost] the whole evil is traceable, I think, to the enmity of the ultra-Tories. They have their reward. Things will go on and become worse till the Tory party is forced into cordial union and co-operation again. To know or believe this is nearly enough to guard against anxiety. This Reserve is yet to be brought into the Field.



*March 19.*

[220.]—The great crime of the old system was its being able to keep the Whigs out of place for a full quarter of a century. It were too much for human nature to expect less than a change from the Whigs when in power. We had no business to put them there by our dissensions and enmities. It is not fair in the [ultra] Tories to quote the Catholic question as the source of these calamitous risks. It is not that question, but *their* excessive, unrelenting, and inconsistent resentment against its supporters, that has achieved our disgrace. The idea of a "Parliamentary Reforming" Tory is very monstrous. Yet such have we seen arrayed against the Duke and the Right Honourable Sir Robert. And these the fruits.

[221.]—One considerable misery of [the] Reform question is this, that whereas other measures, as the Budget, and so forth, have been proposed by the Ministers and at once found wanting, and have been altered; yet the evils of a permanent and large constitutional change will be of gradual and somewhat remote operation, and will be irreparable. They may be,—I fully, and fairly, and firmly believe them,—every whit as unsound and impolitic as those other confessed failures, but

this can only be clearly shown by the more remote and fatal result.

I would argue from what we know and hear confessed, to what is less palpably within the reach of our knowledge; from the Budget and its Authors, to their Parliamentary Reform.

Shall we trust men in an unknown and dangerous navigation whom we have found so lately and so grossly in error in questions of plain sailing?

The Reserve is still at hand, but may be brought up too late. The Tories of all ranks and gradations must be tortured into union; but that may be too late to redeem the Campaign. We shall see, I suppose, next week.

[222.]—Even the friends of Reform ought to desire delay. Their prime office—I mean [the office] of Government and Representatives—is to stand between all impulse and the real interests of the State. If this [Reform measure] be real, delay will do it no harm.

*March 20.*

[223.]—I quite shrink from the idea of there being no seats in the House of Commons independent of [immediate] popular favour. There

would be none such sufferers by the change as the People themselves, whether in the sense of the populace or the middling classes, or the most legitimate sense of all—the great compound will and interest of the State. For what [were] then the check to impulse? what the privilege of virtue and experience?

To-morrow, or next week at farthest, must go some length to decide this question of Constitution or no Constitution. I feel some alarm on account of the obtuseness and narrow sight of even the best aggregate assembly in the world. Their opinion is not so good as that of the best and wisest among them; nor that of their best and wisest alone so good as when assisted by the vote of the wisest and worthiest of the past.

The grand security is to recollect that the present system is the result of ample and free discussion, and long-continued and often-repeated adjustment. It is about the centre or equilibrium of motion. The general interest and general will cannot depart far from a system representing already the general interest, and created by the general will; provided there be time and fair means for the development and expression of the existing general interest and will; and to secure all this is one of the prime, and characteristic, and essential excellencies of the system.

Why then be afraid? I am not much afraid : only that one fears to lose something when possessed of so much that is valuable—

“Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.”

The risk is that comparatively few comprehend our Constitution. Nevertheless, its advocates must triumph. It is not the thing I took or take it for, if unable to withstand such a rude and preposterous attack as the present. The Whigs Constitutional!—They have shown themselves our system's worst enemies.

*March 22.*

[224.]—In [regard to] Petitions on a question of *change*, all who are silent should be reckoned against the measure.

[225.]—There is no test and organ of public opinion at all comparable to the Parliament itself. That is one of its peculiar and essential features, one by which our Constitution might be described or defined. “The best scheme ever yet contrived to ascertain the real opinion of a large and intricate Community; and so, to regard their true interests.” Any other test of public opinion will be found to resolve itself into the prostitution of newspapers and pot-houses. And this we are told is not only to instruct and con-

trol, but actually to intimidate the House of Commons! [and the House of Lords!]

[226.]—I should like to see a scheme (in jest) got up, founded on [the] plan of [*expressly*] representing all interests.—The East India [Company], the timber [trade], the Church, the Law, and so forth. It would be instructive in its way to some folks who cannot properly interpret the present system.

[227.]—Mr. — the other night talked of the great advantage of speedy and easy elections. "Only think," said he, "of a Minister being obliged to put off a dissolution on account of interfering with harvest!"


I can conceive many indirect but very real advantages from this sort of difficulty, and amazing perils from the opposite facilities: of the same class of things with the difficulty of divorce; the expense of law, and so forth, which youthful or inexperienced politicians generally start with assuming as evils.—Besides, are not the Election rows and delays and *désagréments*, and (to those who like them) *agréments* and dissipations a portion of the means, and very appropriate means, by which the fierce and vulgar democracy are represented and feel their share in the Commonwealth?\*

[\* Note of 1839. I won't stand by this!]

I don't urge this as the best or perhaps as any sufficient argument; but merely suggest it as one of a whole class very likely to be overlooked. The real argument is previous experience. I regard most parts of the subject as quite beyond the reach of ordinary discussion, or even adequate comprehension. Most respected probably and best understood by those who are most aware how little they understand the admirable whole. A theme almost for Angels; as our Constitution has already exhausted the homage of the first men in every age. O ye blind, unholy Whigs!

[228.]—I should like to see some staunch old Constitutional Whig rise and protest against this invasion. Perhaps Sir \* \* \* \* \* is or was of this description?—I mean protest as an old and stout [Whig] advocate of the Constitution. But, as I have often said elsewhere, it is the Tories, [or rather the Conservatives] (who wish to keep things as they are), not the Whigs, who are the really Constitutional party.

[229.]—Amen! A majority of *One* in favour of the Bill. Thank Heaven, there yet remains the House of Lords; and that will gain delay; and delay consideration; and consideration defeat.





I am an optimist, and therefore say Amen. All must be well.—But I say it with a miserably bad grace just now. Amen !

[230.]—The worst thing for a Ministry or party or individual is to carry a bad measure. They ought to guard against this with more care than anything else. I mean for their own sakes, as well or more than for the Public's. They should take actual pains to have each measure fairly sifted and rejected or withdrawn in time, if erroneous. For the reaction is inevitable and fatal. Let the Reforming Ministers see to this.

[231.] This vote may serve to furnish one more argument in favour of the exact excellence of the present system, viz. the House of Commons, as a part (not the whole), being rather too susceptible of external impressions of the day and hour ; to be checked and corrected in the Lords. Its [own] vote for Reform proves the absence of all necessity for the measure !

[232.] How would it do in the mouth of a speaker in the House of Lords to say that " The House of Commons had proved, by its own vote, the absence of all necessity for change,—at least towards the popular side,—by showing itself


already fully susceptible enough of popular and external influence: I say, not too susceptible for its office; but susceptible enough, and exactly indicative of its place and office in the State, or rather [in] the Parliament considered as a whole, Too susceptible and too popular were the measure to emanate from the whole Parliament; though not too much, yet quite enough, as coming from the House of Commons, whose peculiar function, besides many more, is to represent the popular or great [mass of the] public will. For the House of Lords to follow the same course would be to destroy at once the balance of the Constitution. The Commons have done their part, and shown themselves excellent Representatives already, by voting their own inefficiency; such being the external impression of the times. By the very vote, declaratory of their own unworthiness, they have shown themselves most worthy of public credit. It is *our* peculiar function and devoir, my Lords, to protect both them and the public and ourselves from the abuse of virtue. I should desire no change in the opposite direction, on account of this too popular vote. It is too popular for entire adoption; though, perhaps, not too much for the House of Commons to have adopted. The thing, as a whole, appears to me as perfect as ever; more perfect than any other which can be assigned or even conceived. Our

duty to the Country is to check the too-popular Bill, and protect the People from themselves."

[233.] Of one thing I am resolved,—not to become a political growler; but, where I cannot approve, to occupy my time and thoughts rather with other objects.

I will not say that every campaign, in every quarter, and in every age, is necessarily desperate at certain stages; but I believe every campaign is necessarily near the verge of desperation: the difficulty always grows afresh, till commensurate with the full powers of the parties concerned,—at least till more than commensurate with the weaker powers,—and these are never far behind the stronger. Such is the still-enduring contest of this breathing world; such is its constant and essential nature and aspect. The best things always in jeopardy, but still in the end triumphant. Thus is it ever in war; thus in the Senate; thus, even in the Fine Arts, and elsewhere,—the Racers and Bruisers are nearly matched. The ground is ever new and laborious; the result ever anxious and uncertain; or, at all events, requiring for success the full measure of the best exertion of the best men, and their most judicious conduct and co-operation.

Experience and authority, and the "capital" of previous wisdom and exertion are a great deal;



but not sufficient. Besides, many of their stores are open to all parties to the contest alike: most open, to be sure, to those who consult them most devoutly. And there is *our* security.

*March 25.*

[234.]—\* \* I can see or fancy nothing to desire changed. Not even in Politics. The State-machine will work itself clear before long. At least in due and very excellent time; and all will be healthy and vigorous as ever. Perhaps none the worse for the Whig dose and discipline for a season. Some substitute will emerge for the lost Boroughs. The Whigs will be drummed in disgrace through Town; and the worthiest Baronet placed at the Wheel.—The Duke will move one day from the field of his glory; and Sir Walter [Scott] will be missing. But our snug little Planet will revolve as brightly and beautifully as ever; and “as the seasons change,”—whether in the natural or the moral world,—they will but proclaim “the varied God!”—The genuine Optimist has only to look a little farther and wider to restore all his creed, [and all his confidence.]

[235.]—I have read a good many parts of the various newspapers this morning with interest.

It requires a stretch of faith "beyond the ignorant present" to recognise the possibility of good in all these changes. [It requires us to look] as far, perhaps, as the reaction after an impending convulsion.

The great cardinal difference [of opinion] between men just now and ever,—but especially just now,—is whether we shall judge and think for ourselves alone; or call in the assistance of tried authority, and abide by the things we have. Hear what the Duke of Wellington says [in the newspapers of] this morning, and weigh his experience and authority against Earl Grey's:—weigh likewise Sir Robert Peel's against the argument of Mr. Jeffrey. I never read a more palpable circle and "*petitio principii*" than the Lord Advocate's. It is *not* the *theoretical* Constitution [that] we Tories true defend, but the *working and existing* Constitution, which has *resulted* from such varied trial and adjustment as ours has undergone up to this year and hour.

Nothing has gone so far to alarm me as the Duke's speech last night.—I must now look for good beyond the coming Storm and Deluge.

[236.]—Such as it *is*: such as it *has become*: that is the question touching our Constitution. It is a Christian question, not of our people only or our Constitution; and it is revealed, like the

Christian truths, to babes;—and concealed from the wise and the proud. *These* judge for themselves;—*we* are content to use the assistance of others, and [of] all time and all experience.

It is this pride of conscious talent which blinds such master spirits as \* \* \* and \* \* \*; and lends more safety and value and truth to the opinion of far inferior minds. They judge too much for themselves:—we by the assistance of their betters.


*March 26.*

[237.]—Perhaps it ought to be some consolation to remember how much the mere personal character of the King has to do with the present Reform or Revolutionary measures. He may be convinced of his error,—if an error,—yet in time to check the tendency of the evil. Or his Successors may be yet in time.—I mean I should dread the aspect of things more if I could not account for some portion of them by a cause so transient as the opinion and wishes of a single man, whom it is no disloyalty or disparagement to suppose certainly not above the average of Statesmen in intelligence and virtue. This individual opinion and the selfish desire of personal popularity, co-operating with the interests and professions of the Whig party, has been sufficient for a while to throw the Country into

disorder;—the Machine out of gear;—the Vessel from her course.—But the individual opinion and wish must change, ere long, or be succeeded by a safer and sounder head. And this may still be in time; and before the Royal authority has lost too much of its weight to influence the conduct of public affairs.

It is an excellent part of our Constitution to make us vastly independent of the personal character of the Sovereign for the time being. But this security has its limits, and perhaps does not reckon upon the suicidal Monarch. Yet ought it even on that.—But not on the self-destroying Parliament to boot!—For that is to change the very system to which we look for security.

Let us hope that even this contingency may be provided for. My hope would be grounded in the nice and intrinsic excellence of the Constitution sought to be thus tampered with. The less any change is now requisite, the less chance of violent or hurtful change. The more perfect our present system, the less danger,—though not the less folly and idleness,—in any changes which that system may be found or forced to consent to. This is a great comfort in its way. The less need of change, the less risk of hurtful change. And even this will turn out one more fiery ordeal to prove, and perfect, and confirm the already



so [nearly] perfect Constitution of England.—It will not improve, as the vain reasoning politicians suppose and intend, by the adoption, but by the resistance and virtual neutralization, of their nostrums. It will triumph not by and through them, but over and in spite of their infliction. And so may gain fresh strength and virtue for still farther and still severer trials.

*March 27.*

[238.]—\* \* \* Surely a little time and reflection will bring the majority of the nation, which used to be sound Tory, to their senses. In passing, it may be well to chuckle at the way in which the confounded Whigs are identifying themselves with the revolutionary measure, and holding all its parts together. That is, we may chuckle, if we survive the coming Storm.

It is not too much, neither too little, to say of the Measure that we none of us know what will come out of it. Great good may arise,—great evil may arise. So may any man risk his estate at the hazard table,—and possibly improve it.

*March 28.*

[239.]—\* \* \* I fear the Revolutionary Bill will be hurried through at least the House of Com-



mons. I believe it involves not only a political revolution, but a religious and moral one. It is neck or nothing with us [all]—or with the Whigs.

*March 31.*

[240.]—It is quite natural and indeed inevitable that the Whigs should desire to change a Constitution which keeps them so effectually out of place. Keeps them out so long, and allows them so short a term when once admitted. And this because the majority, both in weight and number, have heretofore been Tories and Conservators. These days, alas! are passed or passing quickly. There is no [direct] return to respect once broken up. We must have Foreign defeat and disgrace, and domestic horrors and alarm, before things right themselves,—as I believe they will, in the long-run.

*April 4, 1831.*

[241.]—The political “[corps de] reserve,” is the eventual alarm of the Conservative party; after they have yielded something to save their apparent consistency, but real [and very natural] pettishness.—Item, the pledges and alarms of the Reformers themselves. They are deeply pledged it shall not lead to farther and farther change.

*April 5.*

[242.]—I should not be altogether surprised to find the aristocratic influence *strengthened*, by the Reform Bill, at the expense both of the Crown and of the lower classes. The more immediate Crown Parliamentary influence must be sought rather from the whole Aristocracy, and at a higher price, than, as formerly, from a comparative few and at an easier rate. And even the popular votes will often be more influenced than now by the greater class of Proprietors.

I don't say I see or believe all this, or half of it; but I can conceive it; and should not be surprised to find the experiment, like Lord Cochrane's steamer, work stern-foremost, instead of the way proposed.

I should desire *that*, rather than the opposite; but vastly prefer things as they are and have been. I still hope and trust the change will be more nominal and apparent than real. It is, perhaps, now time for such a change of names and aspects;—now that the topic has been so mooted.

In the end, the real interests, wishes, and influences of the Realm will predominate; and if (as I believe) they have heretofore really and truly predominated, there will in the end be no material change. And all of this, I still hope, without the intermediate purgation of Revolution and

Anarchy, and loss [for a time] of our Church establishment and creed; and the tyranny of both sorts, in succession,—of the Mob and of a Despot:—though all of these we should survive, and return to something like our ancient system.

I still hope, and indeed believe, and pretty confidently trust, that the real powers and interests that be, will in due time assert their full influence, and keep things right, or restore their partial derangement.


There must, I fear, in the mean time, be a change, at least in appearances and names. Partly because the general and genuine voice of the Community (I think not wisely) has come to desire some change; partly because it is needless and unfair to [those in] the right, to be forced to defend abuses, and resort to underhand and equivocal transactions. Their names and aspects may be changed, perhaps with profit. In short, I am ready (though unwilling) to become a partial and cautious Reformer; in order to prevent more serious innovations, and defeat the enemies of our whole system. On this middle ground, possibly, all ranks and shades of Tories may be brought to agree; and then down go the \* \* \* Whigs, and our precious Constitution is safe as ever!

*April 9.*

[243.]—It was the sacred duty of Ministers carefully to prevent the King doing so wrong as to interfere with his *personal* sanction to the Reform measure. They might almost be impeached for that alone. \* \* \* \*

[244.]—I have said before, and repeat with fresh evidence and force, that the grand fallacy of this Reform is a “*petitio principii*,” or begging the whole question; especially in losing sight of the distinction between express and purposed change and that which is natural, gradual, inevitable, and right. I am all for progressive change; but, on that very account, for no express and purposed change whatever. Let the system Reform itself, as heretofore; it is fully and fairly adequate to that end. Such is, perhaps, its prime feature, and grand security, and excellence. Yet such is the advantage these traitors and their dupes seek now to throw away!

[245.]—I think it not impossible, or even improbable, after all is said and done, that our system will be able to right itself before long, supposing the Reform measure fully carried. I believe no good can come of it, and much harm may. But I believe, also, that that harm may eventually be checked, and somehow or other



remedied. I don't see that we must of necessity progress to democracy and revolution, as in America and France.

There is fearful risk of all that, but still many chances of escape or remedy. Such is my inveterate confidence in the truth and justice of our system, in the long-run. And, after whatever round, the nearer we return to our present or late position, so much the wiser and better.

*April 16.*

[246.]—In Politics I have felt pretty confident, for some days, that things will work themselves quite clear before long. For ten days or so the fear of change perplexed me. Perhaps some concession may still be inevitable: I trust and believe no essential change.

Sir Robert Peel seems very fairly to be holding back till properly invited to come forward, and, therefore, likely to be supported by all grades of the Tory party. His value must, ere long, be felt and acknowledged; the want of its due recognition [by our side] already, is the chief strength of the enemy. In the mean time, an irremediable amount of evil may be effected.

*April 22.*

[247.]—I have no notion that [Sir Robert] Peel either will or at all desires to come into place, excepting with the view and the power to carry whatever measures he himself believes the right. He would rather be out of place—as who would not? He bides his time; and that is perhaps at hand.

[248.]—This is an eventful day in all our histories. The dissolution of Parliament proclaimed! The West End of Town was in a sort of fever all afternoon, just like a country town at the Assizes. I doubt if the Ministers acted fairly in offering, they say twice, to resign. Did they not thus seek too much to transfer the load of responsibility to the shoulders of the King? Are they not answerable, after all, even for his mistakes? They say His Majesty is wild on the point of Reform.

L——, C——, and I saw, by pure accident, the cortége at the Horse Guards—the King on his way to prorogue the Parliament. L—— observed it was an ominous spot to receive the shouts of the Sovereign People; just opposite the windows of Whitehall.

*April 26.*

[249.]—Forms, and Constitutions, and Esta-



blishments. The disregard and want of due reverence for these is, to my mind, the reigning tendency and fatal error of the times. The preference of reasoning to sound reason; of present and individual wisdom and wishes to the due authority of [accumulated] experience; of impulse to salutary checks, even on our most anxious and eager desires. May our holy Constitution stand the shock!

*May 11.*

[250.]—Whig principles and men won't do for the long-run; and possibly the Tories may be, after all, the better [for] escaping [from] their ostensibly false position in defending the abuses of the Borough system. The old [Tory] party, meantime, has died a violent death by its own hands. They should have rallied round the Duke and [Sir Robert] Peel.

*May 15.*

[251.]—One great reason of my sturdy Toryism, or, at least, of its extent and obstinacy, is that I am well content, for the sake of preserving the good, to bear with the questionable or erroneous; content not to change much or at all, for fear of the habit and impulse of change sweeping off the good as well as evil.

But, if the good be once swept away, or even

the habit of old deference destroyed, I am ready, on quite another tack, to become a considerable Reformer.


My notion is now, as ever, not to change more than is inevitable; but *this may* be best effected, (after certain changes have been *forced*) by many ostensible and real still farther changes. Such farther changes *may* truly bring [us] or preserve us nearer to what we originally held; viz.:—by restoring proportions.

But what a maze and what a sea of troubles we are involved in, when once thus adrift!

*May 16.*

[252.]—I would abstain from many innovations which I believed improvements, for the sake of preserving other things much as they are. But, once forced to change these, I should not longer hesitate to alter and improve and speculate, as well as the rest.

[253.]—Supposing the Reform wish and opinion permanent and resolute, to reject the Measure now would do the cause no great harm. It would come on again and again, till carried.—But the opposite is different. Once carried, there is no recurrence. By all means, then, delay. If the measure be bad, delay will be fatal to it [and





ought to be so] ; if good, delay will do it no harm.

*May 17.*

[254.]—That man is truly consistent in his actions and his creed who sets out with the desire to ascertain the truth and to discharge his duty, and who continues and ends with the same high purposes; and this will hold good, whatever changes, apparent or real, his faith and conduct may undergo. In this best and most genuine sense of all he is consistent from first to last in seeking fairly for the truth and the right, and heartily endeavouring to ensue it. If no great change [in his opinions] occur, so much the better for his reputation, and perhaps for his repose.

Again, and on the same principle, with a narrower and yet wide application, the consistent politician is one who deliberately follows forth a certain creed and line of conduct which he has resolved to adopt; and this through whatever changes of aspect, or even of reality.

For instance, the genuine Tory or Conservator may come to see or believe that in certain circumstances and at particular critical turns and moments, or after particular events, the best remaining approach to conservation is to change and reform at a great rate. Still he is consistent and a genuine Conservator, if conservation, virtual and


real, be his end and aim, whatever the change of names and aspects.

We may recognise hereabouts a reason why the leading parties in a state may occasionally almost exchange tactics and creeds without real inconsistency or any political or moral delinquency.

I should not be surprised to find something of this very sort and aspect in the next period of our history. Yet will the Tories be genuine Conservatives in advocating farther change, supposing the first effected,—as now seems likely or inevitable. Truth and the right will triumph in the long-run. I believe it to be with the Tories.

[255.]—"Would have been" is the most fallacious and presumptuous of all the modes and tenses of expression. It implies knowledge of the past and the future and of the nature of things beyond all calculation complicated and involved. I would have it banished from all political discussion; or very rarely and cautiously admitted; and then by tried and candid hands.—We have enough to do to know something [of] what *is* and has been and [perhaps] will be; and should leave alone in despair and distrust, our pretensions to knowing what "would have been."

Yet it is the commonest of all modes of Political and Economical reasoning.



May 19.

[256.]—See [in the] Times of 19th May (this day), a statement of the recent votes at Cambridge. All this seems to tally with my notion elsewhere expressed that clever men, *not professional politicians*, are generally and naturally Whigs and Reformers; from [the] habit of thinking for themselves.

The first-rate men of all I believe to be Tories; the second and third rate, Whigs; the fourth rate, Tories; and so on. The second rate, who are practical and [so to speak] professional politicians, are Tories likewise. But it requires an ultra stretch of length and breadth of sight to be clever, and yet a genuine Tory. These are the first-rate men of all, who are not politicians; and such men, when politicians, are the blessing of their country and generation. Both \* \* and \* \* would undoubtedly have been Tories. It is only the [comparatively] ignorant and narrow-minded who are presumptuous enough to suppose they can safely think for themselves on such a topic, and understand all the bearings of such a question. A Whig is one who thinks for himself in politics: a Tory one who adheres to dogged experience, and respects authority; who does not venture in all things, or even in many things, to think and act from the dictates of his own individual opinion and personal experience. He is free in selecting

his deferential line; but ever afterwards there is much of service in what he considers the most perfect, or least imperfect, freedom; much of service and obedience, and dogged unreasoning (though far from unreasonable) adherence to what has been tried and approved.

Both being sincere, both unselfish and public-spirited (and of such examples only, *on either side*, we are now speaking), self-confidence may be said to characterise the one Party, and self-distrust the other.

Due confidence, which springs—and only springs—from due diffidence, may be said to distinguish the genuine Tory.

I say not this because I am myself a Tory; but I am myself a Tory, because I believe and think I see all this.

By “practical and professional politician,” I would be understood as referring especially to men brought up or at least well tried in Office and the real business of Government.

The Whigs, if long in Office, would gradually become virtual Tories;—at least the better and wiser spirits among them.

[257.] The views or arguments—not against Reform, but against the chances of its infliction—are these,—or rather these are some of them:—The [Whig] party have used (or at all events the

public have received) false impressions and expectations, [the fallacy of] which will be discovered, and will react; the movement has been mainly set agoing by the Church and Tory party in their indignation:—we have still to see the effect of their alarm; the House of Lords will afford a time-check for the other forces to come into adequate play; perhaps the higher Whigs themselves may begin to fear and repent.

Time and fair discussion is all I beg and long for.

But I forget the principal argument. The very result of the *present* system in the Elections demonstrate[s] the sufficiency of the Representation of the public opinion and will. This must be seen and felt somewhere, and [must help to] satisfy many reasonable sincere, and conscientious heretofore Reformers.

*May 25.*

[258.] I think I perceive the position and defence of [Sir Robert] Peel, which are peculiarly hard. I believe [him] not only sincere and patriotic,—that is a question of intention, and as nothing in the requisites (though most essential) of a Statesman. I believe him all that, and more;—judicious, and prudent, and brave: I believe, as he does, in an inevitable progression

of things and opinions; and that he advocates and admits the "minimum" of change.

What *is* that "minimum?" involves nearly the whole question.

I never have admitted, nor ever shall, the distinction and difference of "the right" and "the expedient:" nothing is expedient which is not right; and there is nothing right which is not likewise expedient. \* \* \* \*

I trust the Reform may not be farther progressive; but [may] rather bring round the old things and positions and dependencies, under some change of names.

I can still look to Sir Robert Peel as our Prime Minister. His sacrifice on the Catholic occasion was splendid; and I have more faith in the eventual efficacy of sacrifice than in anything else besides. If his heart break not, he will be yet our Refuge.

[259.]—In Politics, now and ever, truth and the right will prevail.

\* \* \* \*

[260.]—The choice was [Sir R.] Peel and the Duke with no Reform; or Reform without these. I mean the choice for the old Tories. They would not have [Sir R.] Peel; and see the consequence! In the long-run, truth and the right

and Peel,—if right and true, as I believe him,—will gradually and greatly prevail and triumph; with or without much Reform or change.

The Tories have more departed from their principles and interests by deserting [Sir R.] Peel, [their authentic and constituted leader and representative,] than ever he departed from the Tories.


There must be a new cast of parts and parties. The old are nearly lost; and probably for ever; because, to restore or return is in several respects impossible. One of the new Parties will be that of [the Duke of] Wellington,—or his memory and principles; perhaps or probably the nearest attainable substitute for the old Tory party. Tory, but not without desire to meliorate.

*May 27.*

[261.]—We know not enough, either of coming events or of their consequences, to justify alarm or much regret. Our system has stamina sufficient to stand even such a shock as the present, and that which approaches; and, if our estimate heretofore have been right, that very system will save itself; if time be requisite, will secure time. If not, then is it, and has it been, hardly the system we took it for; and its modifications need not be so much regretted. I believe, somehow

or other,—which I pretend not to describe or distinctly anticipate,—that the whole will, in due time, emerge with fresh vigour and stability: with new adaptation to the altered or altering circumstances, opinions, and interests of the times,—if these be really altered; if only in name altered,—then but in name adapted. In short, that a system equivalent, essentially and fiducially, to the old, will, by degrees, elaborate itself. And the ground of my faith is my persuasion, that, under the old system, powers and interests went, in [nearly] all instances and all degrees, together. Powers which will now operate to secure their relative and legitimate places and influences to the same interests for the future. No very great matter,—since it has come to this, and ancient deference has been already destroyed or grievously shaken,—no great matter under what shapes or names these fresh adjustments are brought to bear. At the very worst, we know less than enough for much anxiety or regret.

[262.]—My own old notion of perpetual self-adjustment and adaptation, as *the characteristic* of our constitutional system, will perhaps justify Sir Robert [Peel] in his rather wide-looking statement of his principle “to watch the progress of opinion and circumstances, and obey their dictates.” Whatever be the changes, our system





ought to represent them. Hence mainly its excellence and permanence. But the changes must be real, to have a real change in that which represents them. A nominal alteration will serve the purpose, if the change be merely nominal. To represent not only the whole interests of all the state, but all their shiftings (and even appearances), both was and is the very perfection of our representative Constitution. If we go wrong for a while, we shall presently go [? come] right again, with a "momentum" proportioned to the recent error.

Such is my faith in our political scheme; and on this faith I repose, not certainly with indifference, but without much anxiety or doubt.

[265.] I doubt not in the least [but] that opinions and measures will continue to oscillate round genuine truth and the right, as heretofore; and believe heartily, somehow or other, that [Sir R.] Peel and [the Duke of] Wellington are wiser than most than either of the Parties who oppose and distrust them.

May 29.

My dear \* \* \* \* \* Half at the least, of our former hearty friends of the Constitution will be proved unwavering if it do not carry us and itself safe


through the coming storm. Nor is the event at all desperate, even if the first battle be "lost and won:" even if the whole Bill be carried: for the forces of all the Community will then operate to check, or even to restore: not, probably, to restore in name, but in reality: and it will check or restore, or farther yield, in the long-run, just in proportion as the existing system is truly and has been the fair and just and true representative, organ and instrument of the whole interests, opinions, and wishes of the Empire.

*June 15.*

[265.]—As in war, so in home Politics, disgraceful defeat and loss is the penalty and remedy for having any but the fittest men at the Helm. We shall probably have to endure this ordeal presently; and so the people be forced, by their own fears and losses, to recall their legitimate Leaders.

*June 23.*

[266.]—Nothing more certainly strengthens your antagonist than unreasonable and ill-timed opposition: you place him more or less in the right, and right is all-mighty! Besides, your predictions of evil do not follow soon, or perhaps at all; and thus *you* pave the way to fresh and



yet fresh innovations ; till, at length, all may be hazarded or lost ; or only righted and restored by the reaction from catastrophe. \* \* \* \* \*

In Politics I am a Tory, but not an ultra-Tory, excepting in the sense of [those] extremes which are said to meet : I am so extreme a believer in the intrinsic and extrinsic excellence of our Constitution, as to feel pretty well convinced no permanent harm can reach it, do what we may. Thus faith and scepticism meet and shake hands ; anxiety is merged in confidence.

Doubtless there is a limit at which I should fear and acknowledge the essential principles of our Constitution lost or endangered ; but we have not nearly reached that ; nor do I conceive our tendency much farther, or much longer, in that direction. The evil, if an evil, has been already done. I would now compound for a very considerable Parliamentary Reform ; and by degrees the powers and influences [that be] will return much into their old places and modes of operation.

All this implies and supposes and requires, as a postulate, that things both are and have been heretofore quite right and tight and true ; and that no change whatever was requisite or advisable. If things *were not* right, I shall care the less to see them altered. The change will only hitch them a little nearer the perfect ideal of all.

the powers and interests of our Community *most* fairly and fully represented in its Government.

*June 25.*

[267.]—There is probably nothing [ever] lost in the world of Moral and Political Science, any more than in the regions of Natural Philosophy. All is secured and on the whole progressive which has once been discovered and applied.

*June 29.*

[268.]—Our security lies here—that there is a vast majority of power and interest, perhaps in actual numbers, in favour of our Constitution as heretofore; who have been captivated with the [plausible] idea of improving and restoring, not of altering or destroying the Constitution by Reform; who will turn round with a start, as soon as they perceive the danger and true drift of such a Measure; for instance, these will support the House of Lords in their rejection of their own favourite Measure [almost] as soon as they perceive any attempt to overrule or dispute the right of the House of Lords,—for that is an ancient and essential portion of our Constitution. Might and the right will carry the day; but that is not, as yet, with the Whigs and Radicals.

Such is my firm conviction. I say "as yet," because there is going forward a progressive change of public opinion and gradual shifting of interests and powers, accompanied with loss of respect for our venerable Constitution. But here, too, we ought to feel secure; for, of all its excellencies and characteristics, none is so prominent in our system as the faculty of virtual and real adaptation to every true shift of interests and opinions. This is the Constitution I venerate, through whatever changes it may lead. Of all its features, I value and venerate [most] that of its self-control. It is not the representative of the immediate wishes and apparent interests of the Community, but of their permanent and real interests and wishes. Our Constitution exerts over the public mind and conduct an influence [strictly] analogous to the Philosopher's [and especially the Christian's] over his own mind and conduct: it often forces him to do right and checks him from doing wrong, in spite of his strongest immediate inclination. And, after all, what is a Community but an aggregate of many individuals? And where and why should we draw much or almost any distinction between the laws which regulate and ought to regulate the concerns of either?

*July 6.*

[269.]—The old or present system is the true universal suffrage; the change [to so-called universal suffrage] would make it anything but universal. It would represent the interests and wishes of one class only.


*July 7.*

[270.]—One more last word on Reform. It is not that I am a Moderate Reformer: I both would have had and would have now no express change whatever. I say not the thing was perfect, but more perfect than you can make it, whoever you be; more perfect than any assignable.

On the other hand, though I see the danger—and believe its incurrence rash and needless and culpable and selfish,—of still farther and farther change, I do not believe that danger more than a risk. It *may* go no farther, and only help the more to perfect our ancient system.

I would compound for a moderate Reform under Tory auspices: not that I wish for any Reform whatever; and would not despair were the full measure carried by the Whigs forthwith

I know not enough of what may follow to be anxious or much alarmed. Great part of the evil has been *already* incurred, in the destruction of ancient prejudices and respects;



which cannot be restored either by the grant or refusal of Reform.

[271.]—So this die is cast! Majority of 136 for the Reform Bill.

I have two remarks. The great argument against all change is now confirmed: the existing system has *proved* itself *already* sufficiently popular and obedient to the public voice; viz. by the late elections, whose drift was officially ascertained by last night's vote.

Secondly, the old inference as to such a majority in the Commons securing a vote in the House of Lords will not quite apply; though in a less degree it will: for the Lords have not had their usual share in the return of members; therefore the less inference is to be drawn as to their (the Lords') intentions from a vote in the House of Commons.

My opinion is, that the whole game is now up—the whole Bill secured.

I believe this miserable catastrophe is distinctly traceable to the harping and resentments of the ultra-Tories on occasion of the Catholic triumph.

Let us apply the lesson *here*, and not [now] bring some still worse atrocity upon ourselves and Country.

[272.]—How, then, make the best of this?—Even thus. We *may* be ready for such a measure of change, and able to bear it. The argument of danger is drawn from other countries and other times less able to bear such measures. If we can bear the change without still farther and farther progress, we shall be all the better for the change. I feared we might not be able; I hope and trust we may: I believe we may; I almost know we may!

The American, the French, the Greek Democracies afford no legitimate ground for argument or alarm.

But the Church is in danger, and the State to boot! [True.] But danger is not the consummation of danger.

We shall [very possibly] be all the stronger, and better, and more exactly balanced, and adjusted, and representative than ever. All interests and all powers [having] their share, in due proportion: all opinions; all fancies; all apprehensions. Such has been, and such, I do both trust and desire, long will remain, the leading and characteristic feature of our Constitution.

[273.]—I feel pretty well reconciled to the Reform Bill now that it seems inevitable. Not sorry to see the Tories relieved from a false position;




and glad to think the Whigs have now reached their highest, and must henceforth decline, by due and sure degrees. Perhaps some fresh compound or combination may ensue. The Whigs may now afford to act fully and fairly on Tory principles ; and this I daresay they will attempt.

*July 9.*

[274.]—There can be no harm, but possibly, nay assuredly, much good, in making the best of what remains. I should even be sorry now to see the Bill much modified in its progress. If the experiment is inevitable, let it be fully and fairly tried. It may do mighty harm, and ought not to have been risked ; but may do mighty good. No other Country, at no other time, could stand the shock of such a change. We may ; and be all the stronger and steadier. We stood the Reformation, yet kept our Church : the Revolution, yet kept our Monarchy. We stood the Catholic question. We shall stand the Reform !

What we must see to is to prevent ulterior and excessive progress in the same direction ; and here we have the above noble instances to our comfort. Such a salutary check as I venture to anticipate is a result natural and characteristic of our political system. It distinguishes our



Country and Constitution from the French and North American, not less widely than from the Turkish or Russian.

Its main feature is the true and universal representation of the interests, and powers, and wishes of the Community, with the means or mechanism adequate for their just expression and exertion. It is not the Whigs alone, or chiefly, that have carried this great measure,—no longer, I conceive, dubious or undesirable,—but the expression of that general wish and interest, and the exertion of that general power. And there is not any tendency to farther and farther change in the fiducial portion of the Community; but rather a slight tendency to reaction.

Of course [farther] attempts will be made; and they will threaten to succeed. But I apprehend no danger, or not great danger. Our system contains within itself the means of regeneration and immortal strength. It is based and built up in eternal truth and justice.

I am as stout an Anti-Reformer as ever; I would have had no change whatever. But as the change is [now] inevitable, I must believe it right, and try to make the best of it; and that [possibly] a great deal of good.

I believe the Whigs went into this measure in part from selfish, or rather from Party motives;

but then, I give them credit for sincerity in their attachment to their Party. They risked our Constitution to save their own Party from annihilation ; but then they believed it important to the Constitution that their Party should prevail, or, at all events, should escape the impending annihilation ; and I believe they were right in that impression.

If the Whigs are really wise, if they really desire to do permanent good to their country and themselves, they will become henceforth substantial Tory Conservators.\*

If the Whigs proceed one step further as Reformers, the power which placed them where they are will hurl them from their usurped seats in a [trice]. The power which, in consenting to Reform, has believed it helped to restore and preserve our system. Another step, and that power will be alarmed ; it is at all times resistless with us. It is *the* public expression of *the* public interest [or rather wish] ; its most authenticated record is the votes of the House of Commons, or rather the Acts of Parliament, whose likeliest index is the votes of the House of Commons.


\* [The term "Conservative," seems to have been invented later than 1831 ; I believe the Quarterly Review had the merit of coining it.]

*July 10.*

[275.]—My faith in Sir Robert and the Duke is unqualified and unshaken, and almost unshakeable: viz., I would rather believe some error in my own eyes, or ears, or apprehension, than suppose them wrong. This would be servile and absurd, were I fully possessed of all the requisite information towards independent judgment; but that is quite impossible. Therefore, in circumstances the most dubious, dark, and intricate, I would trust men who have given me so much reason to trust them heretofore.

[276.]—In the Political, as in the regions of [all other] Science, it seems to be one of the provisions of nature that there shall be a supply, or constantly emerging succession, of prime difficulties, on the verge of [im]possible solution. Such may be the means of preserving the best subordination of men and things, by calling the ablest hands and stoutest hearts to the top; and keeping them there.

A proximate cause may be recognised in the constant near balance of conflicting interests and forces of all kinds. We have ever been, and must ever expect to remain, pretty near the verge of danger, and destruction, and defeat. It is no new thing, nor was its former statement exaggerated or untrue; though we have as yet



escaped. We are never far, nor have been, from the brink.

The moderate Reform question is now the point of extreme perplexity : who can resolve it ?

\* \* \* \*

*July 16.*

[277.]—Some rather desolate fears in regard to Politics ; with farther and confirmed faith in Sir Robert Peel. His life is a series of delicate, intricate and difficult sacrifice. He would fain quit the ungrateful field, and leave the Bill to its course, and the country to its fate ; but that would be against his deep [and abiding] sense of public duty.

I think the Whigs and [ultra] Tories may about equally share the blame of these dilemmas, and all that they may lead to ; and that Sir Robert and the Duke, and their small party of unqualified adherents, have alone, all along, acted, not only for the best, but really the best.

If this be true,—and how few will believe it true!—the truth will come to be felt and acted upon, known and acknowledged in good time, even yet.

I still hope to see Sir Robert Premier, in time to save our Constitution, in the main.



*July 20.*

[278.]—As to Reform, I rather doubt if \* \* like Claudio, be not too sanguine on the score of immediate reaction, and in contempt of the enemy. I am not quite sure but that the Bill ought to pass the House of Commons as now fashioned, and be lost in the Lords. That would complete the full argument, that *already* the Constitution of the House of Commons is sufficiently popular and representative of the prevalent public opinion, right or wrong. And this should strike at the root of the whole question. The triumph, so far, of the Reformers, would demonstrate the inutility of all Reform; would demonstrate that no Reform was requisite—even on their own showing—in that department, at least, of the Constitution.

I should like to see this put by Mr. Fullarton, or some [other] able hand.

*August 16.*

[279.]—None of the greater things ought to be done, or are with us done, directly; but by longer or shorter round-about. And this virtually includes the essential instances of vigorous and immediate action. For, 1st, such things are done under responsibility, and will have to be fully and deliberately answered for; 2ndly, and chiefly, they are done by men sifted and selected,

and trusted by deliberate round-about; by combination and complication of means and forces, and interests and views; and by former trials and so forth.

Great questions are carried not on their own insulated merits, nor on the direct and immediate and individual estimate and consideration even of their remotest bearings; but they are carried indirectly, by means of men and measures, sought out and trusted in *other* quarters, and for other purposes, who are found to consent or not to such a question. Thus the Catholic question first became a neutral [or no] Cabinet question, because no efficient Cabinet *for other purposes* could be formed from the anti-Catholics; and then it became a Cabinet measure, and was carried by men tried and found worthy in *other* quarters. The individual and immediate question ought to be put, as it were, [in some degree] aside, when we desire to judge fairly of its merits. We are all unfit to judge it directly with fairness, and dispassionately, and disinterestedly.

And thus will it be with the still-pending Reform question. We have lost the services, for a time, of our best men, in all the departments of the public service; because they would not consent to have anything to do with the Reform measure. We have acquired the public services of men incompetent to the task, [merely,

or chiefly] because they volunteered the cause of Reform.

Thus we arrive—any one arrives—the Public and the People arrive—at an indirect estimate of the Reform measure itself. We find it forwarded by men who show themselves incompetent on every other score; we find it opposed by men who have shown themselves most competent on every other score. Therefore the measure is wrong. Therefore its bearings will, in due time, come to be perceived.

Thus, without venturing to judge the Reform question on its own merits, we arrive indirectly [or round-about] at its condemnation or approval by safer and sounder means than any immediate appeal to our judgments or interests or wishes.

For another Class of instances of the indirect or un-immediate method, which is ours, compare the elective American President with our hereditary King. Ours ultimately resolves into a choice or consent; but by no means immediate, or direct, or individual, or even of a generation, or a preponderating interest.

Look, again, to the co-operation and counter-action of the Legislative and Executive. Look to the Courts of Law, and the Parliament.

Thus we are best secured from impulse, and our own narrow selves; from the effects of our immediate wishes and rash judgments; from our



own passions, and prejudices, and pride, and folly.

*August 17.*

[280.]—It would make a not ill-timed article in “John Bull” to propose a string of Reforms; such as doing away the name of Woden’s-day and Thor’s-day, and so forth; remnants of barbarism!

*August 19.*

[281.]—Much of the recent and threatened mischief on the Reform question arose from the circumstance that vast numbers of the adherents to the old things as they were never pretended or much cared to examine the grounds of their approbation. When at length roused to think and examine and answer, they were naturally startled with the anomalies and nominal abuses of the system, which its real thinking defenders had all along known and accounted for and satisfactorily explained. Our hope and chance is now that even thus much of consideration and discussion may have served to reconcile and reclaim the old friends of our Constitution, so as to place them and their opinions on the same footing with the ancient thinkers and defenders and Conservators. The progress and process is natural, and perhaps not undesirable. It is just as well, if not better, that men should have a reason for the political faith that is in them. Time only is requisite for all this;

and if the working of our system secure not time enough, it is not the system I took it for, and I shall care less to see it changed.

[282.]—The Monster Public are always for “eating” and “having” their cake. They wish the services of our best men, and measures which those men will not consent to advocate. They cannot have both. Thus are great measures forwarded or thwarted duly, and the true spirits drawn to the command.

[283.]—The Tide seems a-turning in the Political Ocean. \* \* assures me \* \* is now regarded on all hands as the ablest man in the House.

[284.]—You can save war only by vigour; not by evasion, or show of apprehension, or weakness, or longing for peace. That only tempts the enemy.

*August 27.*

[285.]—Revival of idea [that] the Duke of Wellington, when once fairly retired,—by success probably of those he now assists,—should write Memoirs, to help the good Cause of constituted authorities, and open many eyes.\*

\* [This was written several years before the appearance of the earliest volume of the celebrated Gurwood Dispatches. In 1838,

*August 29.*

(286.)—I said that probably disgraces and defeats abroad would alone rid us of the Whigs. I had looked to actual defeats in actual war. But these Portuguese and Belgian transactions may serve the purpose equally, and perhaps at smaller cost. They are one and the same so far as Ministers are concerned. These defeats are the same as real war defeats and disgraces, and from a similar cause, mismanagement at home.

*August 30.*

[287.]— \* \* \* These are the things which force or ought to force us back to humility, and practice, and the rule of common sense. My own conviction is quite clear and unqualified, not only that we know little or nothing of the intimate nature of things, but that we are, as at present constituted, incapable of [thoroughly] knowing almost anything. That our duty and

I took an opportunity of bringing the above suggestion under His Grace's notice. But, it is to be feared, to no purpose. In the mean time, let me express my *grateful* conviction, that, in accomplishing his arduous and delicate task, Colonel Gurwood,—who had the merit of originating the idea of such a publication, and the still higher merit of persevering for many years with its preparation and execution,—has rendered an important service, not to this Country alone, or to the Military Profession, but to the Human Race.]

safety, therefore, is alone in the Tory principle of deference and dogged adherence to what has been found to work well enough. This, both in Religion and Politics; and in all research.

[288.]— [Read] Sir Joshua [Reynolds' Discourses]. Here is our true guide, philosopher and friend! The genuine Tory of the Fine Arts; and anywhere else besides. [Here is exhibited] the difficult, efficient, practical, and admirable combination of research, with due deference; of theory [or] speculation [with practice]; of care, with courage; of faith or confidence, with humility; [of service, with perfect freedom.]

O, RARE SIR JOSHUA !

*August 31.*


[289.]—When a point is once fairly settled, it is put, as they call it, on the shelf; and, after the parties immediately concerned have moved off the field, is apt to be forgotten, and perhaps disputed over again. This seems to me the predicament of most constitutional questions amongst ourselves; and the issue, in nearly all instances, must be much the same. Though [often] forgotten, the reasons of our faith are not the less substantial and tenable; and their record may be drawn from the shelf as often as required: or, if that record have perished, they will stand

the same discussion over again, with the same result.

The only requisite is due time for fair discussion ; and *that* our system ought to secure perforce, and in spite both of its friends and opponents.

For my own part, I am not disposed to question any decision whatever thus arrived at ; or to defend anything which is condemned after such a trial. For the deliberate expression of public opinion by the competent organs and authorities, properly informed and exercised, is the very source from whose operation in former times I have derived my confidence in things as they are. Hence, all I require, even for the Reform question, is time for deliberate discussion, and for the due expression and operation of all the interests and authorities concerned. Comparing the question, in [regard to] magnitude, with the [Roman] Catholic and others, I should be disposed to consider it several times as great as any of them, and therefore fairly entitled to a longer and fuller discussion even after the period of its first passing the House of Commons. How many times over was the Catholic question tried after the first divisions in its favour ? Not a few hours or months, but a few more years, at the very least, are requisite for the fair trial of such a portentous question.

O, ye ——— Whigs !



*September 3.*

[290.]—\*\*\* We can stand a prodigious shock. Such is my general and nearly invariable faith in public men, that I believe most of the Whigs honest and conscientious, and well-intentioned in their Reform, and elsewhere. But then, every [merely] “well-intentioned” man [in public life] ought to be hanged, as somebody [so pithily and truly] said.

I don't quite know what to think or expect as to the chances of defeating this cursed measure. Some compromise, I fear, is now inevitable. Of one thing I am confident, that whatever line Sir Robert Peel takes will be the best possible or practicable in the circumstances.

*September 21.*

[291.]—Vague and cheerful impression that really the Bill need do and may do no harm, provided we and all hands unite in resisting farther steps.

*September 22.*

[292.]—In Politics, I revert very confidently to the opinion that our institutions are virtually indestructible: That we can stand even the Reform Bill, for which [visitation] we have [perhaps] more to thank the ultra pride and indignation of our

friends than the rash Whigs: That the Whigs are deeply pledged and interested and anxious to prevent any farther movement, and the Tories must unite with them at least thus far; unless they desire to repeat the error of their own ultras in opposing [the Duke of] Wellington, after the Catholic question had not only become inevitable, but had actually passed. There should be no despairings, nor sulks, nor even resentments, in the conduct of national party affairs; no abandonment of the whole, because a portion must be yielded or lost. Individuals may, and sometimes, possibly, ought to act in this way; and verily they have their reward: but with Leaders and Parties never should it be so.

All this supposes the Reform Bill actually carried; which I rather desire than believe may not be. It will do all the harm it can; and all or nearly all it will do will be harm; but the harm will be nominal and transient, like the promised good.

*September 23.*

[293.]—

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*September 24.*

[294].—The Scotch Reform Bill [was] carried last night by a large majority. I care little what they do in such respects with Scotland or Ireland: these will prosper mainly by reflection from England. It is in the *English*, not the Scottish Constitution, that I see so much to venerate, and cherish, and regret.

*September 27.*

[295].—Again and again I see the paramount importance of this distinction, that, if now passed in the Lords, the Bill is for ever passed; but if thrown out, it is only put aside for a year of fresh discussion, or for a very few years. If [*then*] persevered in to the present amount, and with such results as have already come out, the Bill ought to pass. And if it cannot stand such repetition of its discussion, it ought not to pass.

*September 28.*

[296].—Idea of expressly going back to old debates, and trying the predictions by subsequent



results; and the men still in the field by their truth or falsehood, [as exhibited by the event.] N.B. Those not venturing to predict are worth so much; those right, so much, &c.

[297.]—Surely; if the People really wish a change, let them have it. But, 1st, Who are the People? 2nd, What is the authentic organ or expression of their wishes at any given moment? 3rd, Is [even] the [best] authenticated wish of any given moment the real wish of the People,—their true, genuine, and permanent wish? And are there no means to rectify, and ascertain, and confirm such evidence? Are not these means delay? Ought not the Lords to secure that requisite delay, both for their own sakes and for *ours*?

If, after repeated trials and cross-examinations, and some delay,—perhaps after two or three years, or two or three Parliaments, and changes of Administration,—the People adhere to their present wishes as at present expressed, and authenticated as at present, then shall I say “By all means let the change be tried.”

*September 29.*


[298.]—If [this Reform Bill be] carried,—as probably something of the sort, and no mean portion, may be carried in the end.—I prophesy that the

eventual effect will be a gain of importance and power to the House of Lords, and a commensurate loss to the House of Commons. This, I take it, is pretty nearly the reverse of the reigning impression on *both* sides of the question! The House of Lords will become more like the Roman Senate, and the Commons like their popular meetings. For wealth and all "*pouvoir*" will continue to tell mainly some one where: the influence driven [thus rudely] from the Commons will take refuge with their Lordships: the staple property and interests all over the kingdom, in all ranks.

[299.]—I should not altogether wonder if the Reform Bill were to strengthen and widen the influence of the Lords in yet another way; by breaking up the [old] monopoly of the Borough interest and spreading the same virtually over the whole House. Probably [this notion is] unsound.

*September 30.*

[300.]—If the Reform Bill be rejected [in the House of Lords] by a single vote, I shall be contented and glad. All I desire is time and repeated trial of the question. The next trial will mark the progress one way or other; even under the same Whig auspices and their pet House of Commons. Would we could secure but



one more trial! We shall stand all the firmer from the shock, if not demolished by the first assault.

*October 5.*

[301.]—Our Constitution was and is not so much distasteful, as unintelligible to vulgar minds; whether on the Throne, the Woolsack, or elsewhere \* \* \* \*. There is something too refined and admirable, and self-controlling and denying,—something too indirect and remote for vulgar, ostensible, and immediate comprehension. For instance, look at the illustration referred to by Lord Mansfield. “Could the Duke of Wellington have remained behind his works at Cintra, had the conduct of affairs at home been under the control of a Reformed Parliament?”—Could the Elgin marbles have been secured to the country, or the National Gallery founded?

Nevertheless, I doubt not [but] that, if we are to change, we shall shuffle soon into something as good and great as ever; for this reason chiefly, that the former and still subsisting régime was itself the result of sheer shifting and shaking and adjustment indefinitely repeated and complicated.

Moreover, my opinion [though singular] continues unchanged, that the loss will be with the

House of Commons, the gain eventually with the House of Lords, in power, and every resource. The former power and excellence of the House of Commons was not owing to its immediate connexion with the People, in the vulgar sense of that [abused] word, but was owing to its connexion with the People in the larger and more legitimate sense of that word—including all interests of all ranks. The House of Lords may now become the main depositary and representative of the mass of property and intelligence and virtue throughout the Community. The Commons will secure a larger share of representation and influence in the House of Lords; but that very circumstance will help to shift the seat of Empire. There can be but one main seat of power at one time, in this or any country. Ours has been heretofore the House of Commons.

I should regret this change, though in the direction opposite to what is supposed likely to ensue; because I should regret to see the ancient and admirable House of Commons polluted and degraded from its high estate.

*October 6.*

[302]—Some considerable Reform seems now quite inevitable. I judge from the admissions of

our side. It will then remain for us all to make the best of an indifferent bargain, and learn, from experience of the Catholic question, never to indulge in revengeful and inveterate opposition to what is proved inevitable by being actually passed. Let us be cheerful and considerate, and resolved to find and preserve and make things right. \* \* \*. Let us be faithful, resigned, and obstinate Optimists. Whatever has been, is, or ever shall be, both was, and is, and must be surely right, [when properly viewed]. It is but our ignorance and narrowness of sight,—and pride of judgment without means large enough,—that makes us ever doubt or dispute this holy truth.

[303.]—Why, the old Tory party were too strong,—and will be all the better [for] some subduing. They were strong enough to throw out of Office the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel!

Strong enough to do what was wrong!

[304.]—Perhaps [the threat of] this monstrous Bill may be just enough to familiarise the [Tory] mind to change, so much as to admit what is right and legitimate; and which our native horror of change might otherwise have resisted with success. Nay, it may be enough, and just enough, to make us all glad of some minor changes.

*October 7.*

[305.]—It is the destruction of the House of Commons, and its peculiar powers and position, that I should lament from the Reform Bill and its consequences, rather than the destruction of the House of Lords, or our Constitution. It will only strengthen the Lords, and make a transfer or shift in the Constitution; but that may not answer half so well as the other arrangement. The House of Lords seems at present to contain an unusual proportion of able men. This, too, will help to steady matters.

*October 8. 6½ A.M. Lobby of House of Lords.*

[306.]—Majority 41, against second reading.

Huzza! There's life in our ancient Constitution still. My pulse beats higher!

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## CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE MAJORITY OF 41, TILL THE SECOND READING CARRIED  
IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, APRIL, 1832.

*October 8, 1831.*

[307.]—This was the opening day (O bright and auspicious omen!) of the new College in London: "King's College;" the good old Tory Church and State antagonist of the "Liberal," Sectarian, Whig "University" of London. The peculiar characteristic of the one has been to separate religious from other instruction; and the characteristic of "King's College" is to restore [or rather preserve] their union, as heretofore.

[*"SANCTE ET SAPIENTER."*]\*

*October 9.*

[308.]—By far the most important and grateful thought of yesterday was the fresh confirmation of faith in the good and great cause. I am ashamed of my former apprehensions \* \* \* \*.

\* [The motto over their gateway.]


Let no sound heart despair or even doubt for the issue of what remains of the present struggle ; or for all others of the sort to come.

*Mem.*—I felt myself yesterday decidedly and rather keenly a Moderate Reformer. I would take the edge off their murderous knife.

[309.]—\* \* \* I suspect the movement is too precisely towards the Duke and Sir Robert to please the ancient Ultras who ousted these. But the times are not quite ready and ripe as yet for the Duke.

For my part, I am prepared to subscribe, implicitly, to whatever the Duke and Sir Robert Peel suggest or yield to ; well satisfied that they will consent to nothing but what they believe, with their superior means of judging, the minimum of evil, and maximum good, which all the circumstances admit of. I should not be surprised at some other attempts and failures, before we succeed in getting back the genuine Pilots to the Helm.

[310.]—Little trace of political intelligence, good or bad. The threat and danger seems to be an indefinite Creation of Peers, which would be grossly unconstitutional and arbitrary. But what will men stick at—Kings and Ministers—who could so advocate and originate the late Reform Bill?





The nearer the verge of horror and destruction, if not [actually] incurred, the better; for it will teach the Tories to quarrel with their Dukes!

*October 11.*

[311.]—In the strictest propriety of Philosophy and Faith, I suppose we ought not to presume to congratulate our good Stars on any happy event,—as on the late majority, for instance;—not knowing—as we know not—but we may thus [only] gain a loss. But still, there is naturally, and not unreasonably, a fair bias that way; and we may be allowed some sorrow and some alarm, in the opposite circumstances,—and yet no impeachment of our faith and humility. It only shows we are but men, women, and children; not Angels and Demigods. And as men and women thus constructed, we are best suited to our several places and devoirs

Therefore do I presume to be glad at the recent triumph of what I hold so sincerely to be the cause of Right and of *true* Liberty;—follow what anxious consequences there may.

*October 12.*

[312.]—The grand use and meaning of the House of Lords, is to ascertain and indicate what is genuine public interest and opinion: 1st,

in extent; and, 2ndly, in duration. Or rather, such is the grand use and meaning of our whole Parliament, of which the House of Lords is an essential and independent portion or member; as each of the others are, in the same sense, independent and essential. And I am ready to peril the whole case on this issue, anti-Reformer as I am—that if, from delay and repeated discussion, the cause of Reform continues to gain ground, year after year, or trial after trial, instead of losing ground—then, both will it, and ought it, to be carried. By that time the Lords will have been converted, and will have served their useful purpose of a drag to a laden waggon going down hill. \* \* \* \*

*October 18.*

[313.]—The question [of Reform] is out of all proportion too large for full and fair and adequate discussion at once. It contains in itself materials for twenty or thirty or three hundred bills, each requiring separate and ample discussion; and, moreover, many of them requiring trial. To discuss and despatch the Reform question at once,—however long and laborious the debate,—is like discussing the whole Law at once, instead of one small item at a time, and for half a season; or, at all events, like discussing

a whole department of Law at once. For instance, the whole Criminal Law; whereas, Sir S. Romilly and Sir R. Peel, in their Criminal Law reforms, brought forward at a time but a portion. For there is but a strictly limited amount of human strength and attention capable of being given to any topic at any one time. If one-twentieth part of a given topic be sufficient to occupy fully, and exhaust the whole allowance, what chance have the remaining nineteen parts of adequate discussion and deliberate judgment? Or rather, what chance has any twentieth, or the whole?—for the imperfect and insufficient allowance is distributed over the whole. As to prolonging agitation, we are none the worse of having always some “ganging plea” on the carpet; and it is only the monstrosity and size of the present which makes its prolonged discussion undesirable.

*October 20.*

[314.]—The “wrath-of-man” principle of “*per contra*” is at fine full work in several quarters just now; [viz., the principle on which the passions of men work in the *opposite* direction to that intended by themselves.]

The Mob, Whig, and Reformer’s wrath at the Bishops will help more and more to identify the Church with the contest, and waken or recall

the Tory sleepers or deserters. That were enough!

[315.]	*	*	*
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*October 21.*

[316.]—I am glad the odium of rejecting and checking [the so-called] Reform has fallen so distinctly on the [House of] Lords, and there especially on the Bishops. For the time is coming round—(if I mistake not,—and of course I speak only as I think or believe)—the time is coming round, when that which is now odium will be recognised as credit and sterling service; and then the same rule of its distribution must be observed. Thus will the high and holy uses of the House of Lords, and of the Church in affairs of State, be confirmed, and more than ever established and deeply rooted in our Constitution.

[317.]—There are mainly three sources of political knowledge and foresight: the knowledge of other times; the knowledge of other places in our own times; and the knowledge of human nature and of ourselves.


*Oct. 22.*

[318.] \* \* \* [I am] not sorry to mark the accumulating odium on the Bishops for their recent vote,—so sure [am I] of the due and timely reaction, and the then uses of this odium. It is thus, of all instances, that God makes the wrath of man to praise him. See how these wretched lower-caste Reformers are playing our game for us, and riveting the right, and maturing and hastening their own disgrace and defeat!

[319.]—"God save the King" was called for by the galleries, and nobly met by the orchestra and the house [Drury lane Theatre].—Possibly, as the old and excellent Horatio says, "All this Reform affair may do good to the cause of Royalty in a direct way,—much as it threatens the cause indirectly and eventually." And, in the mean time, our system ought to be able to stand the trial even of such a combination. To be superior, in fact, to the wisdom or folly of any individual Monarch, and to any desire of the moment, in any quarter whatever; or in all quarters,—unless likewise judicious and just.

*Oct. 23.*

[320.]—I have the same sort of faith,—and not much inferior in degree,—for my Political as



for my Moral and Religious creed. Indeed the whole three are not easily separable: they flow from the same fountain and reach the same wide sea: indomitable confidence in the eternal sufficiency and eventual triumph of Truth and the Right.

[321.]—One extra, incidental, compensating, slight advantage will result from this Reform discussion and alarm. It will teach the bearings and value of our Constitution [in Church and State] to many who either were indifferent before or took it much for granted. Many will thus learn good reasons for their [own] faith and ours.

[322.]—It is not the strictly good and true, without mixture, that prevails,—for so would nothing human prevail,—but that system in which the good and true preponderate greatly. Take as the two prime instances, one of truth and the other of goodness—(though both are likewise good and [both] likewise true)—the Christian system of Philosophy and Religion and Morals, [as sustained and interpreted by the Church of England,] and the British Constitution.

*Oct. 28.*

[323.]—Want of faith in the stability of our

establishments, ecclesiastical and civil, is to a certain extent, and in a certain sense, want of faith in their excellence and sufficiency. They who despise and distrust both are confident a speedy change will be effected. Surely it becomes our side not only to resist, but *disbelieve*, the probability of such changes.

[324.]—I doubt not this shock will do our Aristocracy and Church some good, and help thereby to perpetuate themselves. For, though still excellent, there is a tendency to corruption in both, if too long spoiled and worshipped. I believe their virtue and truth will bear them triumphantly through the present critical struggle, and worse perhaps to come, though severe enough to have upset them, had they not been thus true and excellent. All I desire and have desired, and [we] have so far obtained, is adequate and deliberate discussion.

Oct. 27.

[325.]—The Church and its patrimony is, indeed, more than any other, already, and in its present shape, the patrimony of the poor. \* \* \* For what is the easiest mode of access to the House of Lords for the middling and lower

Classes?—Through the Church. Great personal merits and scholarship are [perhaps] surer to arrive by that route from the people than by any other.—And, far short of the House of Lords, what is the easiest or readiest or surest mode of access, for the lower classes, to the best society of the land, and the most comfortable and respectable living?—Assuredly the present Church of England and Ireland.

*October 29.*

[326.]—Alarming second edition of the Albion talking of sixty or seventy sons of Peers to be promoted to the House to pass the Bill.—The Whigs, I am satisfied, will now do all they can, without mercy, and not unreasonably. The fault was with ourselves, to desert and distrust the Duke [in 1829.]

*October 30.*

[327.]—The Reformers are working their own [eventual] defeat [almost] as rapidly and surely now as Tory could desire. They will soon rouse and warn our half-and-half friends;—our good old honest “well-meaning” moderates. The Church in danger will not much longer be termed an idle cry, nor the State neither. And when the time comes round for more positive action by the




Tories, we shall find Sir Robert and the Duke at their posts again.

*October 31.*

[328.]—The Bristol riots will do much good to the Cause, by opening the eyes of our old friends. [This is] but one of the many instances, all round and a-coming, of the negative working of the right: the “wrath-of-man” principle.

*November 2.*

[329.]—Political matters seem to have gone to a wish —(a savage wish, some folks would say) in the West—[at Bristol]. For, I believe, such is the “minimum” loss of life and property inevitable in such times and circumstances. The instance will tell loudly and largely elsewhere. I say not to the defeat of Reform, but to the readjustment of men and things, and the development of truth and “the right,” and, I may add, “the might,”—wherever these may be. And I believe them, more nearly [so] than any assignable, when much as before. I believe our former system, and its administrators, \* \* and \* \* \* most nearly of any conceivable, or at all events practicable, to the right and just and free;—that restraint and bloodshed were then at the “minimum;” therefore increased by any change.




*November 4.*

[330.]—At all events,—whether by some compromise, or by rigid adherence to the old, or by some means as yet unthought of or unsuggested,—still the same problem remains for solution in my mind: “How most entirely to preserve things as they are; the ‘minimum’ of [organic or] constitutional change;” neither will any one but an ignorant or obstinate opponent pretend that this rule strikes at the root of all or of almost any improvement, or opposes itself to the inevitable progress of events, and the changes of men and things, of powers, interests and opinions.

I can *conceive*, though not anticipate, circumstances of apathy elsewhere, which might induce me more or less to vary the above text of my political creed and purpose; but there is [at least] bias and spring enough, as yet,—as ever there has been,—towards innovation.

Moreover, I would innovate and experiment to the right and left in almost every quarter besides [or except] our holy Constitution in Church and State. Perhaps the prime excellence of that Constitution, or one of its prime excellencies, is the fact of its not only admitting and bearing, but amply and safely securing, [*true*] Reform and improvement everywhere, as soon as authenticated; and examination, fair and free, [almost] as soon as suggested.




*November 18.*

[331.]—Yesterday were rife rumours of political change and resignation of the Whigs. Not an hour too late—perhaps a little earlier than one might desire: they have hardly yet done their work, though pretty nearly. I have but two words to say: 1st., That when and whatever happens must and will be right. 2nd., That whatever the Duke and Sir Robert consent to undertake will be the best which circumstances admit of; and more probably right and true than any [other] assignable.

For my own part, I would [now] desire some change, in order to prevent the future recurrence of the present or recent combination, with fresh “momentum,” under more able leaders, taught by late experience, and less ably opposed. I would change to the “minimum” amount requisite to re unite the Tories, and recall the Country Gentlemen of England to their constitutional allegiance. What that amount may be I [would cheerfully] leave to Sir Robert and the Duke to ascertain and inform us.

*November 20.*

[332.]—The King’s personal and selfish ambition of a certain reputation rather than the reality, viz., to be *thought* the protector of his



people, [was] much, or rather immediately, the cause of recent and still-existing alarms. It was the Minister's duty to [have] turn[ed] that ambition to good purpose and true.

*December 3.*

[333].—Soberly, faithfully, and resolutely confident once more,—in these critical times,—that we cannot but get right ere long in our political world. The ancient, good, sturdy, dogged, purblind Tory faith and best wisdom of the Community will presently resume its wholesome English sway. The Whigs will return to their legitimate *out-post*, and perform their useful office of snarling, quick-sighted watch-dogs. The glorious Duke and Sir Robert will likewise resume their post in the Citadel; and I care little what they do: it is sure to be right.

*December 6.*

[334].—The King's speech seems unsatisfactory. That cursed plague, the Reform Bill, to infest our shores again so early! And other things in seeming disarrangement.

*December 19.*

[335].—The game appears up at head-quarters. Let us hope our Constitution is indestructible;

and that we merely pass forward to some new phasis of prosperity and power.—Mean time, I have enough to do at home.

[336.]—Read portions of Sir R. Peel's late speech. I have no fear of the eventual triumph and intermediate happiness of a Statesman who begins with such holy sacrifice of self. There is one comfort, after all, in this defeat on the Reform Bill; that its accomplishment will punish those who deserted Sir Robert and the Duke.

*December 25.*

[337.]—Claudio's hopes from an article in the Morning Chronicle. But I fear the [Ministers] will hold on, and carry their measure, butcher-fashion, by the creation of fresh Peers.

*December 27.*

[338.]—Such is my present sulky, suspicious and desperate view of Politics, that I can look upon the war in Ireland, and on the Continent, as sources of satisfaction, from the chance they might afford of ridding [us] of the Whigs and their Reform abortions.

For, the arrival of dangers and difficulties on the large scale will [soon] force the abler men to the head of affairs, and send these bunglers to the right-about. But what a forlorn hope

is this, and on what wretched terms; and even these uncertain!

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*January 4, 1832.*

[339.]—The creation of Peers will be, or would be, or has been, an act of sheer despotism on the part of Ministers; and as the King failed to change his men, when defeated on the Reform question, he thus took from himself the usual immunity. \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* If these things are suffered, our Liberties are not worth the purchase of three straws—they are already lost: if not resented yet in the Country and in the House of Lords, by the full and final rejection of these men and measures, in spite of all their Creations and “Coups d’état;” as I still believe and trust they may be rejected.

*January 6.*

[340.]—According to the Morning Post, there is no longer any doubt as to the result of Lord Grey’s visit to Brighton. His Majesty has consented to the Creation of Peers. So farewell to the present order of things! Farewell to our Liberties and their Constitution, if submitted to!

\* \* \* \*

\* I still trust that hardly any practicable amount of Creations will be effectual towards carrying any measure in so brutally despotic a way.

\* \* \* \* But, what is more to the purpose, I trust to see the Reform Bill yet thrown out, and the tyrant Whigs along with it. To "trust" is [to entertain] a sort of half hope, half wish; something short of confident belief or expectation.

*January 10.*

[341.]—\* \* \* \* The days of [undoubting] Faith, like the days of Chivalry, are gone. But truth and the right, which is *not* with these Philosophers, but with the Church and the Tories, will, in the long-run, mightily prevail, and in the end!

*January 13.*

[342.]—The Newspapers on both sides are silent this morning and to-night on the Reform Peer creations; which I still regard as ominous. Most heartily I desire, and nearly hope, my unpleasant surmises in this quarter may prove ill-grounded. Much harm will be done by mere Creations, even if ineffective; and if effective, then

[will the step be] doubly and damnably destructive.


*January 23.*

[343.]—In one not inconsiderable sense, it may be said that a good deal of practical Reform has been already effected, and will have been already effected, although no single item be changed in the ancient system; for the jealous eye of the Public will be [henceforth] more fixed on the exertion of abusive privileges; and will affect their exercise to a wholesome degree.

*January 26.*

[344.]—Vague, large, resolute feeling of dislike and distrust of Politics and Political discussion. We should remember better the Socratic conviction, that, in fact, we know little or nothing. The ground I would take, as ever, is, that we know not what we change to in quitting the good or pretty good, and the long tried and often adjusted. But if once the change were made, or [its avoidance] hopeless, I should still say we know not much or almost anything of its effects. Our grand ulterior security is our indestructibility.

How deliciously, heartily, soberly, and resolutely I relapse and escape from all these worries





to the deliberate and dogged pursuit of the Fine Arts!

*January 31.*

[345.]—The Political horizon promises some clouds and changes. But I am sick of hopes deferred in all that quarter; and shall not believe the Whigs are going—till they go.

*February 2.*

[346.]—The “Times” again on the balance. An awful and critical period—“chez nous.”

*February 5.*

[347.]—The French, Belgic, and pseudo-English Governments go together on the Dutch treaty and elsewhere, simply because all three are usurpers.

*February 11.*

[348.]—Some interest in last night’s House of Commons passing allusion to the Peer-creating butchery. Sir R. Peel’s tone perhaps the best: not to entertain at all, but laugh at such an idea; not to suppose it conceivable. In this he resembles Claudio; and I hope they may prove cor-

rect. I have more faith now in Claudio's view, from Sir R. Peel's confirmation. The thing is, indeed, monstrous and desperate, and utterly unconstitutional; but so are the men and the measures it is brought to prop, from *the* Reform Bill downwards!—We are hardly safe, therefore, in using such an argument in such fearful circumstances.

*February 17.*

[349.]—Claudio's political optimist faith seemed yesterday a "leetle" staggered from his reading the first half of Sir John Walsh's able and dispassionate and somewhat melancholy pamphlet. I have no doubt of the ultimate or ulterior issue, but fear, at times, we may first pass through the ordeal of fierce and horrible revolution and anarchy. Our Political,—like our religious and moral Constitution,—is, I am quite unequivocally persuaded, imperishable; based in Eternal Truth, and reared in the midst of actual trial, each and all three combined will survive,—if [they do] not effectually and steadily resist,—any conceivable attack. Such is my faith in Christianity,—such my faith in its adaptation to our circumstances by the Church of England,—and such my faith in our whole political scheme, of which the religion and integrity of its citizens forms an essential and inseparable part. The Deluge may sweep away


our generation ; but the precious Ark of our holy Constitution in Church and State will float in triumph for a thousand years to come !—

*We* may perish,—but Thou shalt endure !

[350.]—The strongest Citadel must give way,—at least for a time,—if its Guardians betray their trust.—So with our State.—But woe unto them by whom we are betrayed !

*February 18.*

[351.]—What may the ominous silence and uncertainty mean with regard to the new Peers ? To be, or not to be ?—That is the question ! What means the confidence of the \* \* renewed ?—I still fear the *Butchers* : for to relent would imply in its admissions more virtue than they possess who ever meditated such murder. Therefore, to save the consistency and shame of the Whig Ministers and (probably) Whig-sick King, our holy Constitution is to be sacrificed, forsooth !—I wish to goodness I could believe the catastrophe less possible than I do believe it.—Even now I will not consent to think it probable ; far less inevitable. I much fear if the indignation of the House of Lords, and of all true Tories besides, could either check or neutralize the Creation of any assignable number of Peers by the Executive. It



would end in a war of fruitless words. The evil would be submitted to with whatever bad grace: the measure [be] carried by sheer brute despotic force;—and still no revolution,—no impeachment,—no change of dynasty.

Our remaining chance is in the honour and conscience of the Ministers alone.

*February 20.*

[352.]—In Politics still all uncertain. Both sides positive, and as if confident for and against Reform and the Whigs: each [side], more exactly than I have ever yet observed, framing their opinions,—(not to say merely their expressions of opinion,)—according to their wishes.

By this rule I should be indifferent,—which, however, I am far as possible from being,—because in doubt what to believe in, hope, or fear. I can see no palpable check to the absolute and actual power of the Ministers and King; and don't like to trust, now-a-days, to virtual and conventional checks—as those of conscience, and so forth.

*February 23.*

[353.]—Claudio's news of this morning from Mr. — is rather gloomy. It seems certain the

King has given "carte blanche" for the Creation of Peers. Will the Ministers dare to exert, what the King could hardly withhold from their request?—who or what will prevent them? —'s information further goes to surmise that the Bill itself is secondary to the object of Creating Peers, with the view of permanently strengthening the Whig party. But I doubt if such an idea could be known, [even] if true.

\* \* \* \*

My chief remaining comfort is to know how little any of us know of the whole matter. For to reason on what we *seem* to know, were only desolation.

[354.]—The Jamaica fires and insurrections seem to promise a "pendant" to Bristol. Such are the prices-current paid for all political experience. Our growlers are now paying the penalty at home [and abroad] for not being contented with good men and things as they were.

\* \* \* \*

*February 28.*

[355.]—Vague sort of ferocious idea, for a few

moments, this morning, of something like [savage] satisfaction at the Reformers [yet] rueing the consequences of their treasonable measure,—supposing, for an instant, the Bill triumphant;—from the King on his Throne, to the Duke [not *The Duke,*] in his wide County. \* \* \*

\* \* \*  
\* \* \*

*March 3.*

[356.]—Some addition to the notion about convention and forbearance being in Politics the secret of genuine freedom; and that sort of convention or understanding implies, 1st. Faith of gentlemen in gentlemen: faith in virtue and its power. 2nd. Sacrifice on each part of selfish interests and opinions: forbearance from full and palpable exertion of present force, obtained as the means have been through tacit understanding to that effect.

Hence, no true notions [of] Liberty [obtain] in barbarous and vulgar times and minds; nor yet in [such as are] effeminate and over-refined. For both of these are deficient in that cardinal quality,—that essential oil of virtue,—the power and habit of self-denial.

Hence the vulgarity and error of the present Reform outcry. Hence the turpitude of the

better informed Whigs who consent to lend it their aid. Hence my remaining hope of still escaping from the dilemma—, to wit that there are several gentlemen amongst their Crew, to whom the falsehood [falsity?] of their position may yet become apparent.

But I am drawn from the immediate point and purpose. What occurred to me as something extra, or perceived with additional force and clearness, was the truth that the stability of [genuine] Freedom partly rested on this circumstance, that all forbearance and sacrifice, thus essential, is voluntary; and, in fact, itself an exertion of the will and choice. Men are wise enough [at times] to *choose* to be forbearing and ready to sacrifice. In proportion to this wisdom is their capacity for Liberty.

*March 8.*

[357.]—All [as] yet uncertain and threatening in Politics. Nor does it lessen our danger to prove that the chief source rises from the despondency and alarm of our friends.

Perhaps the grand question will bear this sort of aspect.—The King individually cannot have a reasonable right to withhold his full assistance from Ministers on any individual question—(of which they, not he, must be the sole competent


judges),—provided they are Ministers who meet His [Majesty's] approbation,—(and that of the Country from which he derives most of his opinion)—on all *other* measures besides the one in immediate question. Tried by this test, would our present Ministers remain an hour?—Would the King be justified in stretching his Prerogative to preserve them and their bantling of Reform?—If not, then he becomes in a measure personally responsible [by the course now pursuing].

*March 13.*

[358.]—It were almost as unconstitutional and iniquitous to carry an unpalatable measure by the express and certain threat and fear, as by the act itself of despotic Creation of Peers.

*March 24.*

[359.]—So the Bill was carried by an increased majority.—It remains to hope either, 1st., that our anticipations and alarms and regrets may prove to have been unfounded. 2nd., That the new system will prove virtually impracticable and no change, and evasible by the exertion of the old real powers and interests that be, and have been, as heretofore. This I don't mean through





Tory opposition; but by the nature of things: by the operation of the people and the Whigs themselves.

This all *may* be; but the reverse may likewise happen; and the remedy,—disgust and loss and misery and disgrace,—[may] be remote, and beyond our day.

*March 26.*

[360.]—I am not sure, after all said and done here and elsewhere by myself and others, that we may not be the better, or none the worse, of the Reform Bill, in all its parts and pertinents; and half believe we may be able to prevent ulterior measures on the same score. I said so very early indeed in the business, and have never long lost sight or feeling of the belief and hope. Only, what a fearful risk, and how uncalled for! Why hazard what is so well, for what may be no worse, or somewhat better? But which *may* likewise be [so very much] worse!


*March 27.*

[361.]—Indubitably, the Constitution is not worth half our lamentations if it prove insufficient, in the hour of trial, to protect us and itself from the King and the Whigs. It will prove “ipso

facto" not the Constitution we took it for; and the sooner we try to mend it the better; and each convulsion and dissolution and reconstruction will bring us nearer and nearer to the state of accurate and universal adjustment of parts, interests, and powers which I had supposed we already had secured by dint of previous trials of every sort and size and shade. But the fresh and additional adjustment and approximation to perfection, to which I allude, is by no means to be reached in the direct way, by the exertion, forsooth, of legislative wisdom, or the expression and exertion of fresh interests and powers;—that were to reason and hope like a presumptuous Whig, or unpractical Scholar;—the new and still more secure adjustment is to be reached only through the medium of anarchy and dire distress.

If things, as they are and have been, be nearer the state of just equilibrium than they would, or will be, after certain [contemplated] changes, the old balance, or a still nearer approach to perfection, can only be arrived at through a fresh, full, and fair trial and exertion of all the powers that be, in all quarters and on all sides: in short, through civil war.

These apprehensions, which I shall be most heartily delighted to find superfluous, proceed and end in the assumption, that things with us



both are [now] and would [still] continue right and true; that is to say, virtually, and really, and fairly,—in spite of [all] names and appearances and anomalies whatsoever; that is to say, more nearly just and true than any assignable.

If that assumption be illegitimate, I shall not be sorry to see some farther attempts at perfectibility applied; and I shall be willing to rest the decision upon the fact of our enduring certain changes which are [now] proposed without farther and yet farther changes still; without civil convulsion; and without loss of our rights and liberties.

Either we have been wrong, and will be better righted forthwith; or we have been, and [now] are right, and will be grievously wronged, and then better righted again than ever;—or our grandchildren [will].——

*April 9.*

[362.]—We have heard it lamented, again and again, that the gradual and minute East-Retford sort of Reform was not more followed when and while that would have been held enough; but now it is another matter, and so forth. I cannot see why it should be at all another matter. Now that the whole question has been so *mooted*, I would consent or recommend the going into the formerly

rejected slight and gradual method. And that entirely or mainly, because I believed it formerly dubious [or worse], and now probably, expedient and right. Why not the East-Retford method now or soon? It is almost all a question of degree. The very principle of the Bill is a question of degree; its size and *sweeping* nature is the grand objection to the principle of their measure. Lord Grey's claim of assent, therefore, from the Duke of Buckingham was a sheer fallacy and begging of the question. Neither can I admit that to grant any minute Reform whatever, is to concede the principle of this measure. And the position of the stoutest Tory amounts to this,—no more,—that there is less evil and less danger in keeping things exactly as they are, than in opening [the way] to any systematic change whatever.

*April 11.*

[363.]—"Too late!" says Lord Wharncliffe of the Duke of Buckingham's Bill for a moderate Reform. Why too late?—Never too late while the other is uncarried. And too early sooner than now.

The present admitted "lull" in the public mind on the subject of Reform is more traceable to indifference or dislike; perhaps from the Bristol lesson,—perhaps from the wretched state of France "the regenerate,"—perhaps from smart

pinchings of agitation and alarm at home ; or rather from all these and other causes [combined] ; perhaps from the full discussion of the Measure itself, and the lapse of time and due reflection ;—than it is traceable to any fantastic increase of more intense and therefore more silent interest !—Not that I would value silence or its opposite [clamour] above a straw, excepting as an argument to those who formerly assigned that opposite [much] weight.

[364.]—Vague, yet resolute and dogged impression, both yesterday and the day before, while looking down on the arena in the House of Lords, that this and all measures both are and have been, and again must be decided by a certain more [or less] gross, mechanical sort of method—a certain dogged, purblind, sheer composition of forces, and interests, and reasonings, and allowances—rather than by any method strictly logical and definable. The process is rather experimental than theoretical. Rather by actual trial and adjustment, than reasoning “*à priori*,” or even “*à posteriori*.” And so [persuaded] am I of this, that, whatever be eventually the ostensible result and shape of the compromise, I shall be convinced that latent qualities, prices, and arrangements, assuredly compensate those which are ostensible. And this conviction

goes some length to make me indifferent and independent of the issue. We are indestructible, from the exactness of previous adjustments; and those from previous trials of strength, in every possible sense and degree. We cannot get much nearer truth and the right; and cannot permanently far depart from these. This is one of the paramount excellencies of our existing system in Church and State. It cannot possibly admit of our going far wrong. But this remark will apply less and less to each farther step in the same direction,—in any given, or assignable direction. The beauty is, that, the second step is virtually back again,—so soon as the first is felt and practically ascertained to have been erroneous.

Such is my theory, or creed, or faith political. If true, there is nothing for us to fear: if untrue, there is the less to regret upon any change.

*April 12.*

[365.]—I feel somehow oppressed with the conviction that there is no escape from the second reading of the Reform Bill, nor consequently from the infliction of its vulgar and perilous provisions. I cannot [on further reflection] see how Lord Grey's argument is to be got over, that the Duke of Buckingham's notice (and of course




the Duke of Wellington's subsequent approval) amounts in fact to an admission of all that is technically established by the second reading; to wit, the fact that *some* Reform is desirable, or at all events inevitable. How much and of what sort, they contend, is matter of deliberate consideration in the Committee.—This sounds so reasonable and specious, that I fear it may influence or at least serve as an excuse to a number of waverers enough to turn the scale. But how dangerous and deceptive, let us gather from the House of Commons in Committee on this very Bill; and from all former instances of great moment.

From these impressions, and other vague symptoms, I feel somehow prepared for a defeat. I tremble to inquire about last night's Division.

[366.]—The debate last night was adjourned till Friday. It seems to be expected and admitted on all hands that the thing will go by a very few votes either way.

In the event of the second reading being carried, and the House of Lords being able thereafter to draw the teeth of the Bill, and so the subject reaches a sort of termination, it will be important that the latest tendency was thus anti-democratical; the latest impulse in a direction opposite from the "Movement." To-morrow



night will see the Whigs and Radicals (on this supposition) at their highest point or pitch; from which what follows must be a gradual and mortifying descent,—not without reproach.

Should the second reading be carried, and the Lords be unable to improve the Bill in Committee, then will the Movement proceed forward by rapid and sure steps and stages.

*April 14.—9 A.M.*

[367.]—Less than an hour, and I shall know half the drift of all our public and private concerns for the remainder of our generation. It was too much to hazard on a single cast of the dice!—I tremble to inquire the result of this morning's Division——

[P.S.]—But 9 was the number; and the Second Reading carried.

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## CHAPTER V.


FROM THE SECOND READING IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, TILL THE END  
OF 1832.

*April 14, 1832.*

[368.](12 $\frac{3}{4}$  Noon.) Thoughts dogged, resolute, and indignant.

So the die *is* cast!—Well, well, be it so. We must endeavour to make the most of it. But either the whole [Reform] question is different from what I had supposed; or the Constitution and its defenders are not the men and things I took them for,—and their loss or mutilation is the less important.

The farther event will [soon] show whether we have now reached the highest pitch or point in a particular direction, from which there will be a gradual retrograde declension; a gradual defeat and disappointment of the Whigs and Radicals,—with corresponding return of strength to the Tories;—or whether we have only clinched one more step or stage in the old forward progress towards Revolutionary Innovation.



A short time longer, and a few more events,—the very beginnings of these,—will serve to *indicate the tendency*. And, according to that tendency thus indicated, I shall incline to believe either the Reform question will have accomplished no considerable harm and virtual change, or that it will lead, before very long, to a complete upset of all our interests and institutions.


\* \* \* \* \* I never apprehend a permanent change or loss, but fear an intermediate upset: truth and the right must triumph in the end; and, of course, I believe truth and the right to be with my own side; otherwise it were no side of mine,—either to adhere to or select.

I shall probably for a long while be less nearly an immediate politician, in consequence of this morning's Division and its effects. So much, perhaps, the better: so much the surer of use and power in the end; and in the mean time happier and more industrious and more respectable. Amen!

I presume not to regret anything whatever; not even the Division of this morning.

*April 16.*

[369.]—[On reflection,] I cannot regard the Division as otherwise than a grievous defeat and loss; no better that accomplished by the virtual



desertion of our own ranks. We shall neither get rid of the Reform Bill, nor of the Whig incumbency, nor of the ruinous Creation of Peers.

Nevertheless, as Claudio still insists, nothing at all has yet been actually done; it is only as yet so much of threat or progress. And between "the say and the do," &c. [Between the cup and the lip, &c.]

[370.]—No tidings, and hardly a thought of Politics.—I believe we are indestructible; which alone will save us from the effects of Whig misrule. Our system has secured delay so far, and will yet more; and delay is almost everything towards a right and true adjustment, be that what it may.

*May 6.*

[371.]—Lord——'s report of Sir R. Peel's unpopularity with the genuine Tories is the most fatal thing I have heard since the Second Reading.

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*May 8.*

[372.]—The debate of last night in the House of Lords and division of the Committee; majority of 35 against Ministers. This is a fine set-off against the Second Reading. Now must quickly follow the full tug of war. The Whigs have a desperate and difficult choice; to sacrifice their Party—or the Constitution, fairly and finally.

We know as yet nothing whatever of the consequences, but that a long Cabinet Council has been held, and that the Chancellor and Lord Grey went at Three towards Windsor. My only apprehension is from the still existing disunion of the Tories. They, or we, will do no true or permanent good till heartily united, and led with mutual confidence by Sir Robert and the Duke.

*May 9.*

[373.] They are all out, and the ancient Constitution thrives for ever. Huzza! \* \* The Whigs [are] out of their usurped places! All's right, tight, and progressive! \* \*

[374.]—I am so glad the Whigs went the length of proposing Peers, and of throwing the whole "onus" (which will ere long be credit) on the King. \* \* \*

L



Had they retired as honest ancient Whigs, on the constitutional point (especially Whig), of avoiding such a monstrous stretch of the Prerogative, they must have retired so far with honour to themselves and Party. But now, how gloriously despicable! God save the King!

*May 10.*

[375.]—In Politics, our grand security now is that we shall have the “minimum” of inevitable change; I care not very much how great or how small the change; it will now be the smallest which the times and whole circumstances admit of. The *tendency* too is altered;—the bias, and progress, and “momentum”; and this is a great deal besides. Then, we have able men for other topics and departments.

[376.]—The course now should perhaps be a Bill in the House of Lords, to be sent to the Commons for their acceptance, *or* their own dissolution. Whether, under the Duke and Sir Robert [Peel], or some intermediate administration, I know not which to predict, or even desire. I would rather have it under the Duke at once.

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May 12.

[377.]—It seems now certain that the Duke of Wellington is once more at the helm. I am quite prepared to believe and maintain that whatever he shall sanction, and Sir Robert Peel,—however considerable and however lamentable,—must be right: viz.—The “minimum” of evil and change which present and recent circumstances admit [of].

May 14.

[378.]—The Radicals are angry and indignant, and dislike the Tories even as Reformers; even to the full intended extent of the Whigs, *because what THEY had looked for was something even more and beyond.* They considered the Whole Bill as but a step to further and further innovations. Therefore they are furious now.

[379.]—This forming an Administration is one of the last and most refined sieves in the mechanism of our Constitution. It sifts and selects the men; arranges and adjusts all nicer matters of opinion and fact; it completes the last and most admirable stage, step, or link, in the series of Representation of all the interests and opinions of the whole Community. As the House of Commons and even,—nay more,—the Lords, and even the King and Court are virtually and truly repre-

sentative of the larger community of property, intelligence, numbers, and opinions without; so are the Ministers of the day virtually and truly representative of the King, Lords and Commons of the day. The circle is beautiful, consistent and lasting.

*May 15.*


[380.]—In the Reform Bill, (whose existence and responsibility is not with the new Ministers, nor even with the old alone or chiefly, but with the majority for its Second Reading,—which leaves comparatively little choice to the Duke and his men,—whose office in this regard is to carry through *a* measure of Reform, embracing all the principles of the Bill, but in a shape and to a degree least dangerous in their opinion to the interests of the Community,)—I would admit of considerable *variety* of experiment in the enfranchising parts, and perhaps give more than two or three members to the very largest towns, such as to Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow; and so bribe the — [gentlemen] to silence, yet punish them with internal tumult and worry for their pains. I would endeavour to keep up the ancient want [or absence] of uniformity in the new creations. There, as in everything else, I would make the very “minimum” (how great so-

ever) of change which circumstances admit of: the pledges, wishes, and interests of all parties considered, from the King to the Weaver, and thence to the old Reformers, both in and out of doors. The "minimum," or least that would fairly serve the turn, redeem the more important pledges, and gradually tranquillize the Country. From such a Reform, conducted thus by such hands, and without the conductors having the demerit or merit of originating the proposed change,—(for that would imply fresh "momentum" in a particular direction, instead of the opposite, when all was done)—from such a Reform I have no doubt the Country and [our] holy Constitution will derive fresh energy to resist both the attacks of envious foreigners abroad and treasonable Whigs at home. It will relieve the friends of the ancient and subsisting Constitution in Church and State from the more or less false position they have been heretofore obliged to maintain. Gallantly and successfully as we have maintained it, there is no reason why we may not, after victory, select less ticklish [and more tenable] ground. We have not always a Wellington to guard our [old] Towers [and Lines]. \* \*

"Ter Patriæ salvator!"

*Same day, 7½ P.M.*

[381.]—So the whole game is up again! The





Duke unable to form an Administration, and Lord Grey recalled !

I feel more alarm, at length, than ever before. Nevertheless, these are but so many steps more towards——

[Confound] one's Optimism !—towards what ?

Towards the ulterior proper adjustment and restoration of true men and things. But first—a fearful period between.

*Same day, 9 P.M.*

[382.]—At first I would not believe it, and could not “take in” the idea of this change, when reported by——. Then I was confounded, when conviction was irresistible; for I had not seen a Paper all day, nor heard of last night's discussions in the House of Commons. I have since glanced at these, and begin to comprehend how the land lies and lay. All, doubtless, not only for the best in the long-run, but in this particular affair: for mark, the change is purchased by an overture to avoid the Creation of Peers and consequently to modify the “pernicious measure.”

Better [perhaps] that the Whigs should complete their task than the others be forced to incur even the suspicion of evil.

I am as confident as Sir Robert Peel that the Duke has done, is doing, and will do, “all that is brave, and pure, and wise.”

Our turn is not yet come.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

*May 16.*

[383.]—These large, rapid, and strange events in the Political World perplex one's intellect, and try the faith of men and things. Let the Fly-wheel of general principle be brought to bear doggedly as ever, and it may help us soon to an explanation and fresh confidence. That general principle or theory to which, in this particular instance, I allude, is the principle of Political and Moral Optimism [i. e. in *this* Country, under our happy and holy Constitution in Church and State]; the maxim or conviction that all must be right, and true, and for the best, both in the long-run and for the present too. Starting or beginning with this assumption, let us see what may be elaborated or recognised of good even in these dark and desperate-looking [mis-] adventures. Not that *our* recognition will at all be requisite to the genuine eye of faith, either to confirm or to confute; not that *our* being able or not being able to see through and combine the whole, and thus reach some happy and accurate conclusion, will by any means be enough to esta-

blish [the fact] that there is none such to reach. We *may* discover and recognise it; but if we cannot, nevertheless it may well exist, and we shall perceive its bearings before long. Our being able to recognise, or not being able, may affect our immediate comfort, but ought not to influence our faith in the excellence of the great whole; our faith in the kindness, as well as endless power, of that good Providence which shapes and rough-hews all our ends and aims, both public and domestic, both great and minute, both happy and severe.

To begin, then, let us see what roses we may pluck from this angry thorn.

What a wholesome lesson and fair retribution to the King, as an individual, is this his sad degradation and perplexity: the popular breath he loves all lost or turned against him; the Whig Ministers offended and alienated, and yet triumphant. So much for His Majesty's thirst of popular applause. Hence half these pitiful dilemmas.

But there is something better than this lamentable retribution. These things and times will teach His Majesty who are his genuine supporters and friends, and what their terms.

Again, these latest reverses will save the Tory Party from the pain and disgrace, or at least doubtful policy and probity, of carrying almost

any measure of Reform. It is one thing to submit to inevitable defeat, and another to fight the enemy's battle. After all, it *would* have been a monstrous position, to carry anything like the Bill through actual Tory aid and management; something very different from what would have been, and will be now, their assent (albeit on compulsion) to the Measure (more or less modified) of the Whigs.

Again, the stoutness of Sir Robert Peel will effectually and at length reconcile the ancient Tory Party to him, and prepare the way for his undisputed Premiership before long.

Besides and above all which, these trials of strength and fresh developments will save us from the Creation of Peers: such is understood (by me, at least, from the close of Mr. Baring's second speech) to be the terms of reconciliation between the King and his Whig counsellors. That point seems to be safer and surer now than ever. Anything may be done, it should seem, but that.

Then, the Whig leaders have redeemed their Electioneering pledge; and will now be entitled, as I doubt not they will be glad, to modify their Measure so as to reconcile most moderate men.

Moreover, I doubt much, if the Whigs have taste or talent sufficient to improve to any permanent purpose their present situation.




At the same time, and after all, I must confess some anxiety and some alarm. I am compelled to fall back upon my large and ancient faith, in order to gain confidence. But, even if driven from the field of present incident and view, I have but to look beyond to the ulterior restoration and final happy adjustment of all these questions.

\* \* \* To conclude, let this last reflection console us in these days of trouble and defeat: we know little of the facts and reasons as yet, and almost nothing of their coming consequences. Let us not take it for granted that these must be disastrous; rather the contrary,—THOUGH WE KNOW NOT NOR SEE HOW.

[384.]—\* \* \* I have such unbounded and unqualified confidence in the Duke's capacity, knowledge of circumstances, and entire purity, that I am convinced the whole is in the best train possible,—be that however unpromising or unpropitious,—*the best which all circumstances admit of*. We shall see the whole evolve itself beautifully before long.


*May 17.*

[385.]—The firmness and rigid virtue of the old Tories [or rather Conservatives] though it may lose them and the country ground in the



mean time, must gain and secure it in the end. The true method, doubtless, is to force the Whigs to complete the work of destruction, as the least evil which their rash and selfish ambition has rendered, it should seem, inevitable. To defeat or greatly modify the Reform Bill seems now to be out of the question; no matter whether rightly so or not: no matter through what means inevitable: no matter if chiefly through the timidity or despondence of its hearty opponents. Such is the evident fact admitted, however reluctantly, on all hands. There remain, therefore, to be weighed three evils, and one of the three to be chosen. First, that the Duke of Wellington and the Tories should carry the measure officially or by connivance, while themselves in office. Second, that the Whigs should resume their bad eminence and carry the measure by consent, and without the Creation of Peers. And third, that the Whigs should resume, be stoutly opposed, and carry the measure by sheer despotic dint of a large Creation.


Of these three evils, I was inclined to consider the last the greatest; but Claudio, on the hint of Sir Robert Inglis, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Mansfield, [*i. e.* their speeches] has persuaded me that, of the three, the first were most to be deprecated: that it were better the Whigs should carry their Bill by the Creation of one hundred



or five hundred Peers than that the Duke of Wellington and the Tories should submit to do what must be considered inconsistent with their principles. Whether there is much difference between carrying the measure and consenting to its being carried might admit of some dispute; but I believe there is some difference: perhaps a good deal, as matters work and show and tell in the long-run.

If, then, the monstrous evil of a Creation [of Peers], which I hold to be second only to the sacrifice of principle, and fully amounting to a Revolution and permanent destruction of the whole Constitution,—can be avoided; and the Tories saved the crime and disgrace of carrying the measure they dread and detest; it will remain for us to acknowledge that the existing alternative is devoutly to be wished; and to perceive that the Whigs, on resuming the reins of Office, are little better than perhaps unwilling instruments in the great Duke's hands.

The campaign is like another Waterloo, the contest of the Selfish and Christian principles;—of Democracy [or Despotism] and legitimate control; and herein the ostensible Leaders are \*—\* representative of Napoleon, and the Duke still, as before, representative of all true men, and all sound and unselfish principle;—of all good government and order.



Things have been brought to such a pass,—(through the selfish thirst of vulgar popularity on the part of the King; through the restless and reckless ambition of the Whigs, and natural thirst for Party pre-eminence; and through the untimely disunion and premature despondence of the Tories,)—that we may regard almost as a victory—(to be sure, rather like the *French* victory at Waterloo)—what I believe now about to be accomplished by a sort of general compromise; namely, the completion of the Reform Bill without the Creation of a single Peer.

\* \* \* Nothing has occurred to shake my ancient faith in the general and almost unexceptionable virtue of [the leading] public men [on both sides]. I believe them all honourable men, or almost all. But some to their honour and virtue add superior capacity, together with long and large experience; and some to all of these add modesty of judgment and respect for tried authorities and institutions.

These last are the Tories;—and of Tories are first the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel.

*May 18.*


[386.]—\* \* There can be no doubt, as the Duke [of Wellington] said last night in the House of Lords, that by the Creation of a body of Peers to force a particular measure through that House,



there would be an end of the British Constitution.

It is very reluctantly that I must confess \*——\* to be apparently one of the prime obstacles in the Duke's way towards a successful accommodation; as he (\*——\*) was undoubtedly one of the main instruments of the Duke's former overthrow. On the other hand, if we are to get through triumphant, it will be owing to the ultra and extra-ordinary firmness of such men as \*——\* and \*——\*. Men who reject the notion of expedience in the mixed conduct of human government; and adhere to a rigid principle, perhaps too exalted and refined for the practical purposes of life and affairs;—and therefore [virtually] unjust, inapplicable, untrue.

I much fear that even the best of these good men—even, I am afraid, Sir Robert Peel himself, forget [in some degree] or overlook the difference between the *reputation* of evil and its actual commission. What can it signify what may be *said* or *thought* of themselves, compared with what may happen to the Country from their chariness of reputation? I always thought Sir Robert Peel by his conduct on the [Roman] Catholic question (for which, I was no [keen or decided] advocate) had well performed the most difficult duty perhaps on record for mortal man.—He would, possibly, have done still more by a full and fair sacrifice of




himself and his dearest wishes, by the sacrifice of his *reputation* for consistency, on the present emergency:

As the Duke has done.

But possibly Sir Robert felt and saw (and truly) that he could, on such terms, have done no real service. For without reputation he would be without all power.

The "onus" were thus shifted from the individual to the Party; and with them (the Tories and conscientious sticklers for political consistency) will rest the final or rather the immediate overthrow of the British Constitution. With the Whigs will rest the guilt and horror; but with these rigid moralists the responsibility of virtually consenting to the work of destruction. Their doctrine is "*Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*," \* \* \*. But the question remains, what is really the *just* and the *true*?

I believe it is not with these advocates, but with the Duke. I believe the foremost duty of a Statesman is to do the best *which any circumstances admit of*, and utterly to disregard all personal consequences whatsoever; and first and above the rest, the care of his [own] reputation. There is but one thing to make his reputation worth considering, namely its [being essential] towards the subsistence and reality of his power to do good.



It is on this ground that I can excuse Sir Robert Peel: he is chary of his reputation, not for his own sake, but because without it he could do the State no service.

In the mean time, the whole is lost, and all opportunity of useful service.

Perhaps Sir Robert sees the inevitable Tide, and waits its *turn*, to serve the Country most effectively.

In a somewhat different sense from the original, may one truly say that the anxiety to *preserve* one's good name is "the last infirmity of noble minds." To cast even one's reputation on the altar of conceived duty [despising the shame] is the most exalted effort of all. Much more difficult to certain minds than to throw down life and health and fortune and repose!

There is but one thing no man should consent to part with,—the consciousness of rectitude;—no matter for the *reputation*.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

11½ A. M.

[387.] Bustled and anxious about Politics. Things in an evidently critical position. I am glad of \*——\* disavowal of his obstacles;—[glad] of his well-timed eulogium on the Duke.

Surely it may not be too late for Sir Robert Peel and the rest to co-operate and save the Constitution. Oh the curse of caring what people shall say or think, in comparison with what we believe right ourselves !

3 $\frac{1}{4}$  P. M.

[388.] My remaining hope is, that these things, and what may shortly follow, may not be more than just enough to prepare the way for Sir Robert's Premiership, in spite of his own anxious desire and earnest profession.       \*       \*

\*       \*       \*       \*

*Same night.*

[389.] The game is finally up, it should seem, in the political world. The Whigs again in Office ; and assurance gotten for carrying the Reform Bill unaltered. Well, the Creation of Peers were worse still ; and any departure from strict principle by the Tories worse than either.

One comfort is, that the King will be glad to get rid of his present Men as soon as possible ; for they have grievously injured and offended him.

I trust to see Sir Robert Peel the Premier, "malgré lui," before this day six weeks.

*May 19.*

[390.] Traces of very melancholy thought in Politics. The glory is passing, or has passed from Israel! To yield in such circumstances is degradation, and to resist further were madness. Oh these arbitrary despots, the Whigs and the Sovereign People!


Yet it is not these we ought most to blame, but [those] \*——\*——\* of our own side who deserted and betrayed our Cause. It is the disunion of the Tories which has proved the destruction of us all,—of every party. That disunion [however] could not have subsisted without substantial grounds for difference of opinion and interest; and that difference without the existence, somewhere, of evils and errors. Such is the price of their correction; and, if we can at all stand the shock of the “operation,” the health of our whole body-politic may yet revive, and flourish more vigorously than ever. Neither must I neglect any means or appliance which shall help to make such a result more grateful [to myself.] People are so apt to wish what they predict, were it only for the merit of predicting well, that they ought to be very shy of expressing or cherishing unfavourable opinions. For my own part, I deliberately believe our system indestructible; and each fresh arrangement accomplished or inevitable only some nearer approximation to per-

fection; some nearer approach to the perfect representation of all the interests and opinions of the Community whatsoever; or something which will by degrees lead round to such a result.

This seems to follow as a corollary, or rather main consequence, from the position as it stood *before*, of nearly absolute perfection in our system. For that system has yielded this further result: the test and working of that system was right, therefore this result must no less be right; or rather the whole, of which this first result is but a portion.

Neither let it be said or supposed that this is an idle circle or evasion, and would serve to prove *anything* right as well as this: for—mark the important distinction—many other results could not, in their approach and early stages, have secured the assent of the powers that existed and operated under our ancient and pace-keeping perfect system. The strength of the Reform question has not lain merely or principally in the Reformers, but in the assent, or indifference, or disunion of the great mass besides: which assent, or indifference, or disunion could not have existed in regard to many other questions, [and] which existed [in regard to this Reform question] mainly in consequence of certain ostensible defects and anomalies not very intelligible or defensible to common apprehension.

If our old system was perfect, its *first* batch of



results, at all events, must prove beneficial, *or* may be remedied ere long.

If our old system was less perfect than I had supposed, there is so much the less to regret in its modification or loss, and so much the more reason to rejoice at its farther improvement.

[391.] Now must we all unite with the Whigs to resist the Movement-party; no matter which of us (Whigs or Tories) be in power, compared to the importance of this co-operation. Indeed, the very compromise announced last evening may be useful towards this end. We must endeavour to forget our differences, and unite to resist the common enemy: the Whigs, because they have gone at least as far as they intended or desired to go; and the Tories, because, "a fortiori," too much has been done already. The Tories must lend a hand to justify their opponents and half-condemn themselves; and such is my respect for some of our Leaders, that I believe even this, or something like it, may be reached. And presently the Tide may turn, and the Tories resume their ancient position as nearly as altered circumstances admit.

This is one version of the prophecy. The other is continued and accelerated Movement, ending in absolute Revolution and eventual Restoration.

Which of the two, I think, will be determined



chiefly by the possibility and heartiness, or the impossibility and hollowness, of the above-mentioned co-operation.

Let there, then, be no word of idle (though well-merited blame); no talk of impeachment or revenge. Our chance is reunion with the immediate, nearest, and *dearest* enemy!


[392.]—In Politics my faith is still entire: *with us*, whatever *can* be effected must be right.

*May 20.*

[393.]—I cannot help persuading myself, though how or whence I cannot tell, that something will even yet occur to prevent the forcible ruin of our Liberties. It is so monstrous, and such a stride from any point or pitch attained before, that one cannot help expecting some causes latent, but existing, to interfere and prevent the Catastrophe.

*May 21.*

[394.]—So soon as any considerable portion of the Reform Bill becomes inevitable, or has actually passed, I shall be glad to see the measure kept and carried entire, and so the experiment fairly and fully tried. If successful, it will be well for us all; if otherwise, then a useful lesson, what-





ever else besides, to the innovators and their dupes.

[395.]—As to the ungracious reception of Reform at the Duke of Wellington's hands, I would have regarded that as an advantage rather than otherwise. The popular voice is flattered enough God knows, by the carrying of the measure itself. No need, nor much safety, in humouring and coddling the same any more thereafter.

I would have all concessions require to be wrung with the worst grace, from most unwilling hands, as late as possible, and as little as possible. To concede liberally, and with a good grace, and betimes, is a specious way of talking, but I believe generally, if not always, fallacious: it only leads to fresh demands, and nourishes fresh inclinations and fresh hopes of change.

It is the practical working of this system heretofore with us that has proved our main security so far. Perhaps first Mr. Canning commenced the more perilous and flashy Liberal plan; and the [Roman] Catholic question so fully and gracefully conceded was the next departure. Thence comes a liberal Reform; and thence, by neither uncertain nor slow degrees, a total Revolution in Church and State; and property, and laws; morals, and manners, and the rest.

Why, to concede on such terms, and in such



circumstances, is to reason in the language and with the feelings of a gentleman to a low black-guard [bully], who is incapable of understanding one or the other, and only prepared to turn your admissions and kindness against yourself. He thinks politeness fear, and liberality the confession of previous usurpation.

*May 22.*

[396.]—In Politics the world seems to progress down a gentle slope: I can believe it useful, in several respects, that the Opposition in the House of Lords stand half aloof. That will prepare for eventual joint operations against the Radical "Movement" Party; in which joint operation (for it will need the whole) lies our remaining chance of escape from entire Revolution. This Reform risk and infliction has flowed out of the disunion of the Tories in consequence of the [Roman] Catholic Emancipation. As soon as that measure was inevitable or passed, all [Tories] should have united to resist the Whigs and Reformers. And now we shall very likely repeat the same error. It is like the personality and pettishness of sulky school-boys or girls. Better lose all, forsooth, than a part. Doubtless (I mean doubtless to my mind) Sir Robert and the Duke stand as

high, or higher than ever; but how small a length all that may go let former experience teach us. Though always ESSENTIAL, it is not, in these times, ENOUGH to be right.

*May 24.*

[397.]—It now seems clear that the Duke of Wellington and great body of the Tories are acting on a systematic plan. Surely it is better to know betimes when we are beaten, than to fight and die by inches: there is thus, at least, more odium and more manifest oppression, and less éclat with the enemy. \* \*

\* \* \* \*

The difficulty may be great for a Tory government with a Reformed House of Commons; so great, perhaps, that our folks may be inclined to stand aloof. But it must be kept in mind, how very much of all the present Whig and Radical ascendancy is owing, 1st. To the John-Bull reasoners and observers, who see the existence of abuses and cannot be made to comprehend their indirect bearings and advantages; who wish, moreover, as little change as may be requisite to remove these blemishes real or apparent. Hundreds and thousands of such men are pledged by expression of opinions and other-

wise to some reform ; perhaps to the whole Bill ; but have besides no liking to the Whigs, and much apprehension of the Radicals.

2nd. Much is owing to the individual wishes and still more to the unfortunate pledges of the King ; His Majesty will likewise be more free ; and probably glad enough to get rid of his unmerciful Whig Rulers as soon as he can.

Then, 3rdly, we can scarcely have a worse and may have a better or nearly the same House of Commons returned under the Bill ; though I must confess this is unlikely. Nevertheless, perhaps the very [same] Reformers returned may hereafter be themselves more Conservative, even if their constituents continued as before. For it was ever a great argument on all hands that such and such a measure would save the necessity of further change. Hence, too, the advantage of now suffering the job to pass entire, almost unaltered and unopposed ; — now that the game is up.

Whether one should wish the Whigs to remain in Office and pseudo-power, or the Tories to return at once after the passing of Reform seems a little doubtful. Perhaps it were better and safer at once to replace the reins in competent hands, — could these be found to resume them. Which could resist the ulterior Radicals best ? That is the question. Or rather, under whose ostensible

and official auspices could best be arranged and kept up the Whig and Tory combination just alluded to? I don't see exactly the answer.

A very short period will now be sufficient to indicate the future set of the current; whether to further and further change, or to securer conservation than ever.

[398.]—The Problem seems yet unsolved in the Science of Politics, what ought to be the rule of concession to public demands? It is among the oldest and the most important of civil questions; and doubtful as ever. Perhaps [the following] statement may be worth putting to the test of close investigation.

That concession of just and substantial rights will tend to increase [the] stability of the existing System and Community; the concession of unjust or imaginary demands or fancied rights to diminish the stability of the existing System.

For this reason, that each concession of just claims (the "ultima ratio" of justice being sheer strength or power) is a fresh adjustment, settlement, or approach to equilibrium; whereas, each concession of unjust claims is a fresh departure from the state of accurate adjustment and [the] equilibrium of existing forces.

\* \* \* Thus it is that every problem in the



mixed Science of Politics becomes soon complicated and inextricable beyond all measure and calculation; and thus are we forced round again to the dogged, humble, Socratic modesty of Toryism. We cannot adequately reason on such a topic: it is [in some respects] beyond the reach and grasp of the longest and most comprehensive and clearest and purest vision: let us, therefore, hold fast by whatever has been found to work pretty well; much more by whatever has been found to work MOST ADMIRABLY WELL.

To reason where we have not the adequate means of reasoning fairly, is much worse than no reasoning at all.

*May 26.*

[399].—In Politics, I cannot help feeling somehow supported by a certain conviction of our indestructibility. If possible to go wrong, we shall go, or have already gone; but there is an amazing, endless, constant and incalculable “*vis medicatrix*” in the very nature of our System, which prevents any *permanent* loss, or harm, or delusion, or oppression of the right, or mistake of genuine interests or powers. We shall see the whole come about right and tight before long; not by intention or discretion, but spite of indiscretion and the worst intentions. Great is all truth, and will prevail. We were most near truth

and the right, and will come soon round to the same once more. The justice and exact proportionate arrangement heretofore of all the powers, opinions, and interests of the entire Community was our peculiar security, and will be our salvation now. The due subordination of ranks, and powers, and authorities of every shape and shade ; the exact and genuine representation at headquarters of all these ; the equal distribution of rights, and open path to every privilege of every order ; (with the single exception of the Crown) ;  
\* \* \* \* The eternal truth and admirable fitness of our reformed and re-reformed Church ; the discipline of our Fleets and Armies ; the purity of our Women, and courage of our Men. These and all things being so nearly or exactly right, will make any considerable or permanent change impossible, whatever may seem to be the case.

The change will be nominal and of forms, not real : it will be transient and apparent, not substantial and permanent. We shall go as wrong as possible, I have little [or no] sort of doubt remaining ; but we *cannot* go FAR wrong.

To be alarmed at the idea of great change, is to suppose the existence of great abuses and of great powers dormant and oppressed, which will now for the first time be brought into operation. Whereas, I am thoroughly convinced that the very worst of these has *already* exerted its utmost, and

yet has left or kept us where we are. I believe the power of the Democracy and of all evil, great and small, has already been long at work, and in circumstances as favourable as the present or coming, and that our recent and subsisting state is the "resultant," (if I use that word rightly) after these very forces had been fully and fairly applied. The composition of all the forces which exist or have existed was a certain equilibrium of progressive motion: the exertion of all the same again and still *cannot* produce a very different result. The differences will be nominal, if any. For all the forces cannot be made more free to operate than they have long been already with us. Had any class or interest whatever been with us oppressed or unrepresented heretofore, the question would so far have been different. The whole and full possible right and requisite adjustments have already been accomplished. We have nothing more to do.—It is different, so far as I know, in every other country of the world.

My confidence is thus unshaken or restored. All's right and secure as ever!

[400.]—The grand question of alarm or little alarm; of the intended and now seemingly inevitable changes being real and permanent, or chiefly unsubstantial and transient, will be found, I conceive, to turn upon the answer to this previous



question : Are there, or are there not, *new* powers and interests to be created or for the first time brought to bear ?—Are there any to be called forth which have not *already* been in full and free [though indirect] operation ?—Any which have been heretofore suppressed ?—Are there, on the other hand, any considerable powers to be really extinguished which heretofore have been in operation ?


[401.]—The answer most people would give to the queries above put would be unfavourable ; at least their first impulse and answer.—But I believe the answer more like the truth which says there will and can be no [important and substantial] new powers created, or even brought into much more effective operation by the Reform Bill ; simply because these very forces, powers, interests, opinions,—call them and count them as you will,—have been already and are now, with us, in full and free operation. There is nothing more remaining to exert. The full measure has been already reckoned and enforced, and things as they are and have been is the resultant.—In other countries, less well tried and adjusted than ours, the thing may or must be different. *Their* problem is still to work itself out ; whether in North America or in Russia, or elsewhere. They are still out of due balance and equilibrium : not so

we ; as the most desponding amongst us will, ere very long, confess with gratitude and delight.

Now, what have the powers that be and have been amongst us produced ? A certain large, needless, sweeping Measure, unjust, inconsistent and so forth : the very same power will correct the Measure, and prevent its further extension. Not the same vehement will and wish, but the same substantial power and sterling interests in operation as heretofore.

I will listen to no argument for [the apprehension of] further and further change, drawn from the example of other countries, or from our own at other times, until you can first convince me that the whole circumstances are in some degree alike ; until you can begin by showing me that elsewhere, and at other times, the nation undergoing the changes referred to had, before those changes, possessed a freedom of action and expression such as we have long possessed and still retain. They have changed, and changed again, because the internal forces, never having an opportunity of free exertion before, have never found their respective adequate and appropriate level and adjustment. But with us it is all essentially and happily different.

Our changes, great or small, will be but nominal and transient ; and, so far as they go, will do fresh good. Perhaps we shall get the King's



prerogative of creating Peers a little better understood and limited before settling again into the tranquil routine of our indestructible prosperity. Why, our Constitution only thrives and grows the stouter and more perfect with every shock and trial, like the ["brave] old oak."

Neither will any existing powers be permanently extinguished. Wealth and intelligence were and will ever be with us the rule. No matter for transient exceptions. These had with us no extra or exorbitant privileges (as in France had the old Noblesse): our Magnates have therefore nothing to surrender but what will remain in substance still; no exemptions, no unequal rights, no oppressive line of demarcation. There is no flood-gate to remove, and therefore no flood to follow. The waters have *already* stood with us on the just level, or have flowed in the quiet current of a majestic stream.

Not even our own fears and disunions (our worst opposing forces) can permanently work us any harm. We are indestructible,—though perhaps not invulnerable. Our system is based and built up in truth and justice and the right,—and must prevail.

[402.]—In another sort of view, let it never be forgotten how very much of value adheres to a remnant. There comes no point at which to

exclaim,—“We have lost and changed so much, that it is not worth while to fight for the rest.” I take it the Duke and Sir Robert are fully at work now on this very footing,—to save what they can; by in good time surrendering what is inevitably lost. The smallest remnant,—much more a considerable saving,—will be enough whereon and wherewith to recover an equivalent, in due season and due degree, for the admirable whole which our [insane] disunion has broken up so lamentably.

I state such positions as the last above to guard all points, and help to show my eyes are not closed to certain possible or probable contingencies. But my own sincere and hearty opinion of this morning, and this mood, is, as expressed before, confident that all is firm. If not firm as a rock; yet firm as the scarce-bending oak, which strikes its roots in the rock, and sends out its branches to the Heavens.

[403.]—I would, on a large scale, apply the Huttonian argument and illustration to my Political creed. In predicating that existing and ancient causes and forces will operate as heretofore, I beg leave to include the existence and operation of many as yet unknown or little understood; of causes and forces yet to be developed, and as yet latent, and dormant, and

undiscovered. I do not specify the exact means and mode, because many of these (though existing and operating, and having already operated) are as yet unknown to me or to any one else;—just as Sir H. Davy's or Herschel's discoveries were unknown to Hutton or to Sir Isaac Newton, yet were fairly included in the grand Propositions of each of these philosophers respectively.

I know not *how* things will keep or soon come right with our political and moral world; but I feel an unqualified conviction that such will be the case. The existing interests and powers [many of them long latent or dormant] will come into full play just when required. There will be no considerable or sudden shock, or change, or loss, or injustice, or revolution, or war. Much noise, and alarm, and smoke,—no serious convulsion; an Earthquake or so, and a fresh Volcano here and there, and some slight up-heaving of the land and sea; but no “*Débâcle*,” or Catastrophe; no sudden transmutation of species or genera; no considerable break. Our Country has reached its quiescent berth for this edition of the globe. It is not, like Calabria, only under weigh towards its stability; its ancient Whin Dykes are rivetted and crystallized, and cooled to ribs of iron, a thousand [or] million years ago. We have had our shocks and “*tassements*,” till there is nothing loose about us left for much further change of

level, or position, or character. All the World besides may change: our tight little Island can defy the storms.

[404.]—Not the thousands nor yet the millions would have any considerable, or almost any available power whatever,—nor these with the Whigs and the King,—without a great show, and some reality of justice; without abuses somewhere, both nominal and real.

[405.]—We have yet to see the Whigs and Reformers alarmed; and first they must be secure of their Measure. Then will be the critical hour,—if any be critical.

*All* parties have had a large and curious share in hastening this event; and all have an interest,—or all but one,—in preventing its ulterior progress and consequences. The Whig ministers and Party first and most paramount, personal and public; the King scarcely less; the Tories,—by standing aloof, and by disunion,—by secession; the Press and the Multitudes beyond.

All the rest may unite against the last, for the benefit, not of themselves alone, but of *all*—[including those very Multitudes beyond].

*May 27.*

[406.]—\* \* \* \* I believe, therefore, now deliberately, as well as lately with more passionate thought, that all will yet come round in Politics; and leave us, as before, the astonishment and envy of the World. The anomalies and abuses in our [old] system, both nominal and real (though insignificant in my opinion, both at the first and now, and well compensated), were yet of a nature not to bear discussion. I said so, and saw it clearly at the very beginning. The battle was lost when once the full discussion was entered upon; which it was not, except by a reckless [and] selfish breach of [tacit] convention on the part of the Whig Reformers.

*May 28.*

[407.]—Probably one of the grand securities arising from full and free discussion is the silent and gradual adjustments which it serves to accomplish beforehand, by consent; so that when any abuse comes to be fully and publicly attacked it is found to be already virtually Reformed, and removed, or somehow compensated, and by that time much more nominal than real. Freedom of discussion long kept up will point out all requisite and proper adjustments; and freedom of action will, one way or other, ostensibly or latently, gradually and surely, accomplish them all.

Such is the main ground of my present confidence in our stability. Our right and requisite adjustments of powers, interests, and opinions are already, for the most part, made beforehand: there is little to alter but a few names. Not so anywhere else I wot of; for nowhere else has such entire and adequate freedom of discussion and action been for so long maintained. We have no considerable changes to fear, because there are none to make; the thing is done and exhausted, truly and virtually, though not always ostensibly, in all respects and instances, already. *We have nothing to fear but our own disunion and timidity*; and these, with "gentle" and honest men, will not endure much longer.

[408.]—I hold fast, as one of the prime articles of my Political code, or creed, that all very considerable measures are only safe in the hands of the unwilling party.\* We Tories were right in carrying Catholic Emancipation (if right to be carried): we ought to have carried Reform (as soon as quite inevitable); *we* ought to limit the King's creation of Peers prerogative. The Whigs in office ought to limit Popular powers, and extend and fortify the King's position. All likewise against the grain.

\* [1839, Very doubtful.]



The argument against all this is the value of Consistency: but I believe such is a narrow misapprehension of the name and the thing. True Consistency regards the furthering, in the end and main, of some particular and approved line of policy; and disregards, in comparison, names, and appearances, and reproaches.

The true and consistent Tory is one whose policy and conduct helps, on the whole, and [in the] long run, to strengthen and extend [or preserve] the interests and objects his Party profess to have at heart; not he whose almost selfish and certainly personal regard to his own nominal and apparent reputation for consistency drives or restrains to or from acts and expressions injurious, in their accomplishment or omission, to the cause he advocates.

[409.]—A certain limitation of the King's creation prerogative, emanating from the Tories, and of course sanctioned by the Whigs, and thence, beyond, by the great voice of the nation [at large], would be, "*pro tanto*," an express revision and readjustment of the original compact, by virtue of which certain powers were delegated from the whole People (in the most legitimate sense of the word) to the Crown, for the general behoof. The mode or shape of the delegation being, in fact, a more or less tacit assent to such

a usurpation, or the leaving it unremoved when other less tolerable prerogatives were by degrees cut down.

I would vote (though, as a Tory, unwillingly) for some curtailment of the Creation power, because late and passing events have shewn how it may be turned *against* the Crown itself, to a sort of suicidal purpose, as it were. For the Crown's own sake, I would limit and guard the perilous prerogative; as well as for all our sakes.


*May 29.*

[410.]—\* \* \* Now, all these dangers, and difficulties, and disunions, and disasters, that are, and have been, and yet may follow, must be traced back mainly to the error of the ultra-Tories in ousting the Duke of Wellington [and Sir R. Peel]. The errors of the powerful, and [those who are] “generally right,” are always fearfully punished.

I have got downish in the mouth again, from the evident disunion and want of discipline in our Camp.

But, at the very worst, the evil is transient; the change but nominal. We shall get right, or revive, some other day or year.

[411.]—I have very great faith in Sir Robert,




and only greater in the Duke himself. I doubt not, or hardly doubt at all, they have done and are doing the best which circumstances admit of; and that they will help us out of the scrape before long, or leave behind the means of future recovery in other hands.

How the opposite [parties] stick together! But their turn of distraction will come next; and then follows the battle *Royal*! The Monarchy of the People or the Crown!

*May 31.*

[412.]—All fear, in the baser and less worthy sense of that word, implies a want of faith. Those who have the most true and hearty faith in the excellence of any system, human or Divine, will have least apprehension for the result of any trial to which it can be exposed.

I have no less confidence in the excellence and stability—(and thence, in its eventual and sterling triumph and recovery)—of the British Constitution, as heretofore moulded and maintained, than I have confidence in the excellence and virtual stability and eventual triumph of the Christian system. Nor less faith in either than in the eternal principles of Right and Truth, in which both systems have been based and reared.



Each is admirable ; and, except, perhaps, in name and aspect, indestructible.

I have no fear for either !

[413.]—Is there, or is there not, any fallacy in my favourite anti-alarm position, that no new powers are [now] to be created amongst us ; no new interests to gain due and commensurate influence ; no new opinions to gain expression ? For ALL in exact degree, as in the possible future, with us have had their share *already* of influence and expression. Is there any fallacy in this ? Will no new powers be created by enfranchisement ? No ancient checks [be] abandoned by disfranchisement ?

Ostensibly, and *in the first instance*, assuredly : but, perhaps, only ostensibly, and only at first ; not really, or in the long run. For property, wisdom, virtue, and so forth, will operate in strict proportion in future, as ever ; will [legitimately] sway the new votes as they swayed the old.

We have little or nothing to remedy or leave unrepressed. All was free, and fair, and adequate before : what can they now become ? Alas ! less free ; less fair ; less adequate ! But this for a season only ; and then all right again, much as before, because before so nearly accurate.

*June 1.*

[414]—Still I have considerable misgivings upon the favourite Political point, that really no *new* powers will be created by the Bill or its consequences. In proportion to the accuracy of the former expression and exertion of all the interests, powers, and opinions of the whole community, will there be the less possibility to effect a real change. What can be more full than quite full; more free than quite free; whether in expression of opinions, or the exertion of powers?

Why, the alternative is something less full and less free: an arrangement by which the better sort of opinions, and greater properties and powers, will be forced to yield to the lesser and the worse. But this can never long be the case: it is a contradiction in terms, or at least a physical or physico-moral contradiction, to say that the worse and lesser can permanently outweigh the greater: that the smaller force and power can overcome the larger, the worse the better.

The impulse or momentum of a peculiar moment, or series of events, may for a short time disturb the balance or equilibrium, but not much, and not long. Property, and intelligence, and virtue will still, or soon, as heretofore, become and remain the sole arbiters. The ostensible and nominal franchise may be placed in certain new and lower hands, but these will be [duly

and fairly and inevitably] influenced in their exertion [of the newly acquired rights] by the ancient interests and powers of the Constitution. Property and intelligence and virtue will continue, in some shape or other, perhaps more directly, perhaps more indirectly than before,—to exert their full, adequate, and exactly proportioned share of influence, or power.

Are we not, then, driven to this [absurd] conclusion, that the extremes of faith and scepticism meet, and unite, and confound each other? What is the value of faith in things as they were, if we are prepared to approve of *anything* else that may come to hand?

I answer. In the first place, it is only a certain very peculiar and happy position and predicament of things as they were which could admit of any approximation, even, to such a conclusion or result as that just alluded to; only a state of accurate equilibrium, and exact adjustment *already* of all the powers, and interests, and opinions of the Community; a rare, and except "*chez nous*," unknown predicament in the history of nations and the world!


In the next place, I would answer, that "anything else which *may* come to hand," is a mighty different matter from "anything else which may be *expected, or feared, or desired.*" With us (that

is, under the old, and still subsisting, and even thus and now operating system,) not *anything*, but only certain things *may* or can come to hand.

I believe that we have not the vulgar tendency to sheer progression when once put under weigh ; but, if we have gone a little too far in one direction, it is only to accelerate our return to the state of rest, or even about as far on the opposite side. Our oscillations may be considerable or minute, according to the external and incidental impulse applied, but they are all round or about the centre of gravity. And when at rest, our centre of gravity is within the base, and not beyond it; and that base is broad and firm as the rock of eternal right and truth.

[415.]—To wish and even court defeat or disgrace or death in such or such a Cause—the wish, for instance, of the Martyr—is the climax or ultimate or extreme (and I believe essential) guard or security or eventual protection of the cause.

No great Cause will prosper unless it have some men who are not only ready but almost anxious and proud and happy to endure and even court and provoke and invite the severest trials in its defence; nay, to hail with delight




the certainty of disgrace and pain and even death. "To count it an honour and happiness to suffer;" and so forth.

Now, although it may be doubted if human flesh and blood and intellect can *long* or securely encounter such hard trials in any Cause whatever, and deliberately, yet are there examples enough to show what may be done and expected, on emergencies, by many; and, on cool deliberation, by a few. The noble army of Martyrs and amongst these pre-eminent ——\* and \*——; \*——\* and \*———\*; might serve as instances in their respective walks.

\* \* \* There must be some men amongst us not only ready but willing and almost anxious to endure reproach and the severest trials, in order that right and the truth in Church and State shall be preserved amongst us. We must have many Martyrs; or rather must have many who are ready and even anxious to sacrifice their dearest interests and wishes, on the Altar of their Country and their God.

And the more of these we really have, the less likely that any will be put to the actual test or trial.

How can he fear defeat, or reproach, or death, who actually covets each and all of these in a high and holy Cause?—He will not fear; and not fearing, will triumph gloriously!





I am persuaded our **THRONE** and **ALTAR** both are and will be, as they have been, surrounded thickly with such Guards!

[The age of English Chivalry is NOT past. It will revive when needed!]

*June 2.*


[416.]—Why, with us, after all, the forms and shapes of our Constitution were but the vehicle—(granted, most useful and important)—for the expression and exercise of the opinions, interests, and powers, that were and are, in the whole Community. Others believe, either in fear or hope, that there was something factitious, and so forth, in the arrangement, which will now be changed—for the better say one party, for the worse, say their opponents. But I believe things were already true and exact, and adequate in their adjustments; that they were genuine and substantial, and will not be permanently or materially affected by any alteration whatever (or any, at all events, which is possible and admissible) in the shapes and forms of our Constitution. Once to have reached, and for a while retained such a System, ensures [in some degree] its own revival, or rather its continued subsistence.

But the new Voters will elect new Members, and the new House of Commons enforce unheard-of measures!

All this may take place ostensibly and for a time, but all will be duly counteracted somewhere and by some means: viz.—by the genuine expression and exertion elsewhere and otherwise of the sterling and paramount interests and opinions and powers of the Community. Our forms and names are convenient, not essential; superficial, not vital. Other Systems may perish by the loss of names and forms and conventional arrangements, for they are hollow, factitious, and unjust, and cannot stand on their own intrinsic merits; but with the British Constitution in Church and State, all this is widely and essentially different.

Our forms are not *essential* for ourselves, as they are not *sufficient* for others. Our forms will not make the Sicilians or South Americans free or prosperous; our loss of them at home will not make us less free or prosperous. It is but a question of convenience, when you come to push matters beyond a certain conventional point: we *cannot* go far wrong,—or long remain so.

[417.]—It should not be quite forgotten (though it may be nearly) that, after all, and at the worst, the House of Lords *have* exercised a choice on this occasion. They (the majority) chose to secede rather than force the creation of Peers. This distinction may be of use in better



times ; now, it seems almost nugatory ; it may help to *recover* the principle of free discussion and decision.

*June 3.*

[418.]—In Politics, the grand and critical question now is in what way best to check the farther movement.

I have still my doubts as to Sir Robert Peel's late choice : for, the Second Reading carried was enough to place the whole question on a new footing ; he should then [perhaps] (at all personal hazards of reputation and whatever else) have been ready to make the best of the arduous existing difficulties, and to stem the tide as best he might : to have marred the Bill even a very little, even in appearance and mere shape and name, instead of being any disadvantage, would [perhaps] have been wholesome in the last degree : whereas, to yield the complete triumph was to add fresh courage, and so fresh strength, and so fresh demands to the ultimate enemy. The return to Tory checks and power will now be more difficult than ever ; difficult as [it] then would have been.

Nevertheless, if Sir Robert thought his line really best (independently of his own reputation), I am entirely and faithfully prepared to believe it best ; his means of judging were a million times better than my own, excepting in so far as

he was judging for himself and of himself, and in these instances it is [sometimes] more than a million to one against a man's fair judgment.

*June 4, 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  P. M.*

[419.]—The die is cast fully and finally. The Bishop of Exeter has just informed me that the Bill has been read a Third time and passed. I had asked him, "Is the business of the night over, my Lord?"—"Yes," he replied, "and I wish it were only the business of the night!"

*June 5.*

[420.]—When *any* measure is passed and become the law of the land, surely it is the duty of all sides and parties [at least of all good Tories and Conservatives] to forward and respect the same. It then remains for us to make the best of our bargain, however bad. Thus, amongst others, and above the rest, with the Reform Bill. it could not have passed without being more right than I had been in the habit of supposing; and the weakness and division of its opponents were caused by their false position. Besides, the experiment, however perilous, is safer, *perhaps*, entire than mutilated; more likely to satisfy and undeceive the better sort of its advo-

cates. And latterly, some sort of Reform had become altogether inevitable, whether right or wrong.

From these considerations, I gather the defence of Sir Robert Peel's late and present line; at least these make it doubtful; and surely he is entitled to decide either way, in an essentially doubtful matter; especially where so much better informed than his judges. If the Movement be now checked, and the Tories return to power, I shall believe Sir Robert's decision the right one, and more accurate than my own—(my own, forsooth!). But if the Movement progresses with accelerating velocity, and the Tories stand aloof or be driven from their ground, I shall believe Sir Robert's decision wrong: \* \* \* \* for the game was once more in his hands, and he refused to play it. The case was quite altered by the fact of the Second Reading, just as it is now, or in any instance, by the complete passing of a law. And the ungraciousness of mutilation, and of the boon being received from unwilling hands, would have been just so much advantage gained. I do not mean gained to our Party (for to them it might have been rather a loss), but gained to the Nation at large; a wholesome check and lesson to Reformers, even in the last hour of their triumph, which might have helped to keep them contented with what they thus suc-

ceeded, and *barely succeeded*, in securing. *Now* they will insist on more and more, to their own and all our loss.

I will judge Sir Robert herein by the event; for which he has become very fearfully responsible. If he and the Tories return soon to power, I shall believe he decided well and wisely—not for himself alone, or chiefly, and for his reputation,—but [well] for us all. The character of our Party must stand the higher. There is but one thing better and more important still than to possess high character;—namely, to deserve it.

Then, surely, my ancient and unqualified faith in Sir Robert and the Duke ought to gain them more deference at my hands, in these hours of trial. Yes!—and without grudge or limitation, if the two have pulled or still shall pull together. But if the two co-ordinate and commensurate authorities are found to differ, they neutralize each other, at least, so far, as to leave my judgment free to choose between them. I will consent to peril the whole question upon this. If Sir Robert and the Duke have agreed of late, and continue to co-operate, I shall believe both right; or rather, shall believe Sir Robert's decision right,—for on that all turned. If Sir Robert and the Duke have differed of late, or cease now to co-operate, I shall believe Sir Robert's decision wrong; and for the reasons shadowed forth

above. If I must choose between them, I choose the Duke of Wellington.

[421.]—Without doubt, this question of Reform has been virtually carried in its present shape and mode by the Duke of Wellington. I say it as no boast; quite otherwise. The choice of certain evils was before him. He chose what he believed the least. His Administration began on that day the others resigned,—a fortnight ago. Probably this was the best mode for the Duke to carry such a question.

On the other hand, should no evil, much more should great good follow, I feel prepared to give the Whigs full credit, amongst other things, for reckoning (as they must reckon, and have reckoned, if no harm ensue) on certain great and steady opposing and checking forces, which will prevent their Measure from proceeding to its ulterior, and otherwise natural and inevitable consequences. If we, their enemies, and the Bill's, succeed by any means in checking, or avoiding, or remedying the evil, the Reformers will be proved much in the right.


In the mean time, it is pleasant to recognise the writhing, and due punishment of such men as Lord —— and Lord ——, whose untimely opposition to the grand Duke was the true cause of all these losses.

Besides, and after all which and more, there is the consolation that we know not what will come out of anything. A consolation when things look ill; as it is a damper and check when they promise fairly.

[422.]—Bustled and half confounded with last night's speeches and proceedings. I cannot help, in a manner, respecting Lord Grey. There is something always respectable in success. It is so near the right, in these our intricate, and indistinctly seen, and [imperfectly] understood affairs. The best is but uncertain in the best hands: the worst in the worst hands, is not [always] assuredly wrong: [a portion and] *but* a portion lies with us to regulate, condemn or approve. Our best men with their best measures can do but little good unless assisted from beyond themselves; our worst but little harm, unless permitted.

What I dislike and dread is the seeming approximation to American thought and action implied in the triumph of the Reformers; a levelling and vulgarising of the powers and sentiments of our Community.

These are evils of gradual and impalpable aspect and nature. I daresay they will be gradually met and counteracted.





*June 6.*

\* [423.]—What[ever] change CAN be effected with us is either right or remediable.

*June 7.*

[424.]—In the late struggle, we of the Conservative side have shown so far our weakness and error, and deserve in exact proportion to suffer disgrace and loss of power and reputation and whatever else: we have shown greater weakness than I had supposed our due: 1st. By disunion, from more or less selfish or narrow views, interests or resentments. 2nd. By timidity and yielding to alarms, both real and imaginary. 3rd. By actual false position and defect of the defended [fortifications.]

The Waverers have been the proximate cause of our defeat and humiliation; the Ultra-Tories, who turned against the Duke and Sir Robert, were the next in order of atrocity and proximity; next, perhaps, the King's thirst of mob applause; next, the Whigs and Radicals, in their vocation, though stretched beyond the conventional bounds of honour and good faith: next, perhaps, our semi-treacherous Press, as ———, ———, and ———; next, the [contagion of the] "Three Glorious Days" of July


and lastly, the carrying of the Catholic question.

We have met with no more than we well deserved, meaning by "*We*" the whole Conservative party, of moderates and anti-reformers. We had no business to quarrel amongst ourselves. The Duke and Sir Robert have been right from first to last, in my opinion;—both in time, and topic, and mode.

Our remaining chance or security is to unite and adhere to them. Hurrah!

*June 8.*

[425.]—We have heard lately, as in Lord Grey's final Reform speech, the old story from Bacon, of "Time being the great innovator." As if that were not a strictly Tory [or Conservative], instead of a Whig argument! As if the inevitable self-working and gradual force of Time as an innovator did not preclude the necessity and policy of other and paroxysmal changes besides! Why, that is the very key to most of my political Tory creed. We have been, and are ever changing, either in names or things, or both. But—there is the exquisite beauty of our system—all without violence or abrupt transition. I am a Huttonian in Politics, as a Tory in Geology. Time IS, in either, the great innovator!



[426.]—I can see fresh sources of permanent strength and gain (though of immediate loss and weakness) to the Tories from the sharp discipline of these reverses. They will help to unspoil us ; we had got too proud and selfish. Item, fresh sources of permanent weakness and defeat (though of immediate strength and gain) to the Whigs ; —“convertendo:” [or by the converse of the proposition].

*June 10.*

[427.]—I am not without hopes that the proud Whigs, spoiled by success, will soon proceed to fight our battle and their own destruction, perhaps by premature attacks upon the Church, and elsewhere. As will assuredly the Radicals, in regard both to the Church and to Reform.

And such may be the time, and shape, and character of the grand re-adjustment of the real powers, wishes, and interests that be. I watch with entire patience and good [*i. e.* perfect] faith. We cannot go much farther wrong.

*June 26.*

[428.]—I believe we have seen about the worst ; but don't expect much change for a while ; [to better things] experience of error and evil (if such there be) takes a little time and trial. We have

all gone as far wrong as we could possibly contrive to go, by dint of folly and selfishness on one side, timidity and disunion on the other. But we cannot and could not go far wrong ; not so far as to prevent return, in the fulness of time ; the base of our ancient structure is so broad. We were already in just equilibrium of forces, interests, and opinions ; and *must* return to nearly the same, as soon as sufficiently shaken and tried ; and that ere very long. Perhaps next general election after the first.

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\* \* \*

*July 8.*

[429.]—In Politics and Morality, if the remedy for a false step were direct, sure, and immediate there would be thus [almost] a bounty on carelessness and rash innovation ; whether the false step be from mere error of judgment, from passion, from indifference ; or from ambition, resentment, crime.

But as matters are, and were, and will be, the remedy for every mistake or misdemeanor is remote, indirect, severe ; full of bitterness, and loss, and regret.

We of Great Britain have got spoiled with success, and drunk. We must pay the heavy penalty in remorse and aching heads, before we

get things right-about again. I, as a Tory, as an anti-reformer, and so forth, would not wish this otherwise. I hope and trust our Magnates, who ought better to have united and defended themselves and us, will suffer long and sharply for their error.

Nevertheless, things will come round, in due season, as well or better than ever; and the Whigs, in their turn, will have to endure their days and years of repentance and richly-earned punishment; and the eventual result will be a pretty universal sickening at change and outcry, and a sturdily renewed purpose of adhering doggedly to the pretty good old Cause.

Were the respective penalties less severe than they are, and yet will prove, we should be at the same absurd game over and over again. Nations, any more than individuals, never learn [almost] anything from observation of others, where their own passionate inclinations are concerned; but from bitter experience of their own—from remorse and loss and anguish.

But why recur to these angry topics with nothing new or forcible to add?—

Yet, speaking of individuals, I am not sure that I know, or rather believe I know, above one man of note really and selfishly wrong, on any side, in all these adventures. I mean \* \* \* \*  
—I believe all the rest, or nearly all—Whigs,

Tories, Radicals, and Ultras,—to be, and to have been, conscientious; and, according to their several capacities and [mis-]conceptions, to have done, or resisted, or undone, “all for the best.” And I believe almost all at some stage wrong, excepting the Duke of Wellington, and Sir Robert Peel.

All things will come right just after enough of suffering and remorse to teach all sides the value of avoiding needless change.

*December 25.*

[430.]—At least half the battle will be found to turn upon a distinction which the Whigs have carefully and skilfully contrived to keep obscure until the suitable moment. I see it more clearly than before, though before glanced at more than once. The distinction [of] *The Reform bill* being a final measure “quoad” Parliamentary Reform; and its being final “quoad” ulterior results *elsewhere*.

The position the Whigs ought to take, if they are wise; which they now seem to be taking,—perhaps all along have intended,—and which, if we are wise, we should perhaps not endeavour to drive them from, seems to me exactly this,—to contend that their grand Measure shall be final


in respect to the Constitution, and so forth, of Parliament; but *not* final in the other sense; on the contrary, as naturally and inevitably leading to such and such Reforms elsewhere, as they (the Whigs) deem requisite, in Church and State.

With a view to the elucidation and enforcement of this most important distinction, I should not be sorry to see the hands of the Whigs strengthened to a very considerable and almost preponderant degree, at least on many points and in many respects; and that this strength should be evidenced by a triumphant majority on some question mooted by the Radicals; some attempt to force the Parliamentary Reform measure farther, or even merely to alter it, even in some inconsiderable respect. The Whigs ought to adhere pretty rigidly to it, as their Charter and that of the Community at large. Neither would I object to their cautious correction and modification of their own measure [*"bonâ fide"*], in this spirit of perfecting it as a final and fixed Measure in all that relates to the structure of the House of Commons. Thus far the Tories ought cordially to coalesce and lend all their support in every quarter and degree. It will remain for us to battle the watch on other points. Nor do I believe much or almost any harm (perhaps some good — possibly much good) has yet been done in

regard to the Constitution of Parliament, provided the farther " Movement " in that respect can be effectually and permanently checked, or duly controlled.—And I would beg to appeal to the very earliest Jottings in this book made at the first promulgation of *the* measure of Lord John Russell in 1831 in proof that from the beginning I held this exact opinion. " Give us even this, —all this,—said I, and secure us against still more; and no harm, perhaps good, will ensue."

\* \* \* \*

In the mean time, the Whigs (whose leading spirits had probably at first, and never left out of their own sight this very view) have kept their purpose secret or mysterious, in order to secure the assistance at these elections of many half friends who either could not perceive or would not adopt the above important distinction. Now that the Whig Leaders feel their strength, they begin to develope their fiducial principles; and Tory as I was and am, I wish them herein heartily success. They have played a bold and a deep game, and played it well; and I can believe quite conscientiously throughout; always supposing them conscientiously and disinterestedly attached (as I believe nearly all are attached) to their own Party and its Principles; and are convinced that such and such [views] (however differing from my own) are best for the Country.





The great question remains behind. How will these considerations affect other measures of Reform or change?—In the first place, I do not *very*, *very* much care for almost any *other* changes which may be effected, even under the new-modelled Parliament. Keep us secure from farther and farther *Parliamentary* changes, and I dread neither the extent nor nature of the rest. Nay, I should be sorry not to see some revision and re-adjustment almost every where else, to suit the changes there, and to satisfy and sooth the public fever:—even in the Church; even in the revenue.

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*December 26.*

[431.]—Last night I read a portion of the Dec. Quarterly [Review] article on Reform, with little satisfaction. They take the very opposite notion to mine about the next Parliament and the next. I stake my whole credit for Political sagacity upon the notion often here expounded, and elsewhere in [spoken] words, that the next and the next [elections] will gradually and virtually bring things all right again, wherever wrong. The likeliest method to frustrate [or postpone] this result is the tone of the Quarterly and the whole Tory party [and Press]; the tone of despondency and sulkiness. But even that will not prevent the progress I allude to. We shall come right in spite of our Leaders, in spite of our Enemies, and in spite of Ourselves. I assume [of course] that this Parliament lasts several years; if sooner dissolved by the King's death [or otherwise], I must claim an extension of leave for the operation of my remark. I have a right to explain what I mean, and not to be held to words which do not convey my true meaning. Say, the elections this day four or five years,—or three, or six. In short, I mean to predicate and predict that the progress

will be retrograde, rather than farther on. I speak especially of the Constitution of Parliament; the rest must all now undergo revision, but probably not excessive or dangerous revision and change.

Next to Sir Robert and the Duke, I [almost] begin to respect the Whigs. They are entitled to the grand praise of success. The stronger their hands now, the less are they likely to suffer their favourite Measure to run into abuse. The Tories have died the death they earned by the desertion of their best Leaders. At all events, I never deserted Sir Robert and the Duke!

*December 28.*

[432.] — Surely, surely, we had much better and rather wish the grand Reform experiment success than failure, now that it is not only inevitable but actually passed and in full operation; [and “when the restoration of that for which it is a substitute is utterly and manifestly impossible”].\* We, I mean, stout and unqualified Tories, who dreaded the experiment and condemned its (so we thought and called them) reckless proposers. For, what is the alternative? Indubitably farther and worse change.

Besides, I would rather the Country prospered under my opponents than that it failed to prosper;


\* [From a private letter of *the* highest Authority.]

not that I would not still rather see it prosper under our own more judicious, safe, and legitimate control.

The moment a thing is quite passed or quite inevitable (and of this the passing and operation are the only admissible evidence), our duty is to make the most and best of it, for better for worse. I believe most of our Tory calamities past (and perhaps to come) have been induced by our neglect of this wholesome doctrine.

*December 30.*

[433.]—I do hope and more and more believe, that the Whigs in general, and Ministers in particular, mean to make a fair and resolute stand at the point we have now reached, in all that regards the Constitution of Parliament; and to be moderate elsewhere; such is their obvious interest, and it seems the clear duty of the Tories to support them earnestly in the attempt. Nay, Tory as I am, and was, and will be, I am so persuaded of this, and likewise of our obstinacy and idle [and misplaced] resentment, that I can rejoice at the evident and increasing weakness of our Party [strictly so called]. It is time for many to desert the ancient and abused standard. For my own very particular part, I can almost rejoice in the revenge thus inflicted for our desertion of



Sir Robert and the Duke. I hope Sir Robert and the Duke will have courage to support the Whigs next session; the fault—if fault—was all our own. The Whigs have done their part consistently, wisely, courageously and conscientiously. It was our disunion and resentment and want of faith that gave them the power to do whatever they have done. They have done their worst, on our own showing: it will be [partly] our fault if they lose the means of now proceeding to do their best.

*December 31.*

[434.]—The speech of Mr. P. Thompson at Manchester makes one start and pause in one's approbation of the Ministers and their intentions. *That* is a quite different tone from Mr. Stanley's and Lord Althorp's: in *that* case, I am stout Tory still.

Nay, it is of paramount importance that in all the intended (if intended) support yielded by Tories to the Ministry, it should be given under a perpetually renewed protest; and much care taken to keep the old party distinction. It should be given from the Tories expressly as Tories, and to the Whigs only because less bad than the farther movement gentry.

The use and importance of which [precaution]

will come to tell ere long; when the times are riper for a return to Tory [or rather to Conservative] men, as well as Tory measures; be that pretty soon or very late.

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## CHAPTER VI.

AFTER THE PASSING OF THE REFORM BILL.

*Amsterdam, 13 June, 1834.*

[435.]—I see more and more the necessity and the power and policy of genuine Tories to adopt among their principles, more broadly and actively and avowedly than before, the maxim of keeping pace with the times, for the very purpose and on the genuine Tory ground of checking excess and securing the “minimum” of change assignable. The time is now past when harm can come from the Tories taking a lead in the [work of] Reformation. Some years ago that policy might have hastened the crisis or even increased its impetuosity, though that is unlikely; but now that the impulse and agitation have been given in spite of us, we ought, in good faith, to make the best of things as they are and will be: we ought [to do this] on the strictest Tory and Conservative principles,—in order to remove the pledged innovators from the power of doing farther and farther harm. Neither would I take this line sulkily and desperately; but deliberately,

and for the express purpose just explained. I name no actual limits or measures, but point rigidly [and religiously] to the motto "Minimum of change," *be that what it may*; I don't pretend to judge or [presume to] improve—I wish to ADHERE: and in this last qualification lies the true Tory sentiment.

It may often be that, in this sort of arrangement, the Whigs would have come to the *very same* measures and practical conclusions as those I now [venture to] recommend to the Tories: but what a difference to arrive at the *same* point from opposite quarters, and *with opposite impulses still unexpended*!

It is this sort of consideration which makes me fear there are not the elements, as yet, of a coalition in the field: [Mr.] Stanley and [Sir R.] Peel are at one,—on the great points; but with different farther tendencies, and different pledges, express or understood.

I have no misgiving; nor care I whether this or that imperfectly informed opinion of my own prove right or wrong: I have little adequate means of judging on the details: but of the general positions I am confident. We *still* possess the internal means of complete and safe adjustment; and are still ruled, *on all hands*, by honourable men. We are only occupied now in settling the minuter terms of a new long lease of



power and prosperity. The Constitution of our Country,—Church and State,—has survived the cruel and dangerous operation of Whig Reform; and, either in their hands or ours, will soon recover all its suspended energies, and probably much more.

Let our succeeding generations, however, look sharp!—That is their concern.

*July 12.*

[436.]—I long to see a Reforming Conservative Administration, viz. on the “minimum of change” principle. In Tory hands, but revising and re-adjusting everything to the new and now inevitable standard.

This I think [Sir Robert] Peel ought to conduct; and I hope he will try, and be tried.

*July 13.*

[437.]—Once more let me repeat and protest that the Government of this country *must* be Conservative. This necessity, applied to the Whigs hampered by previous pledges and opinions, was the cause of their [recent] disunion and inefficiency. Their position was false. All government must be Conservative, and they were pledged to the opposite.

*October 16.*

[438.]—So clearly am I convinced that either no considerable and substantial change will prove to have been effected in the House of Commons by the Reform Bill; or that the change will be a transfer of power to the Lords, that I am ready to admit a contrary result will be enough to confute me and the Tories, and disprove all our assertions of the former “more perfect than any assignable” predicament.

[Same day] 12 P. M. [During the Fire.]

[439.]—I am almost ashamed to confess how much this destruction of the sacred Houses of Parliament has gone to my heart.

What service that Chapel of St. Stephen has done! And now that its best glories, perhaps, were over, it lights its own Funeral Pile!—What years, what almost centuries of glory and large affairs! The Arena of our Constitution. The field of our noblest triumphs!

*October 17.*

[410.] Thoughts reverting to the loss of the ancient Houses of Parliament, as to the loss of an old, and intimate, and respected friend. Next to original Pictures and Statues,—which are,

perhaps, the only real and irreparable losses by Fire,—are the Walls consecrated by time and history of such places as these. Such places! Where are there others such or second? Only the Abbey and St. Paul's. Books can never now be lost. Places and things of mere money-value can be replaced, and better than ever. But the ruin of one's fond associations is sad; and cannot, and *will* not be restored!

[441.] Thoughts recurring dreamily and with regret to the lost House of Commons.

To be sure, the time was pretty well arrived, when they had so tampered with the moral Structure. The new House may be best suited to the new version of the Constitution.—New bottles for new wine.

At all events, we'll *make* it best,—by making the best of it,—a simple and sufficient rule.

October 18.

[442.]—This loss of the Houses of Lords and Commons is *so* like the loss of an old familiar friend. One recurs to it. The occupations of the hour distract us for a while, and we lose sight of it. Presently we feel a gap or blank, and again dwell on our bereavement! Something of this feeling I observe in every one's tone and look.

[443.]—I said “in every one’s tone and look;” I had forgotten the Sovereign People standing by hundreds in the channel of the River,—who clapped their hands and cheered each time the flames rose higher.—This I saw and heard repeatedly and distinctly from the Terrace Gardens [Cotton Gardens] about Ten o’clock.

October 19.

[444.]—It was good time, perhaps, when we *had* changed the venerable forms and realities of the Constitution to change likewise the scene of its ancient triumphs; or rather, having retained the stern realities alone, and cast aside the Poetry and Chivalry of the subject, it is fit we should enter on our new,—and I doubt not equally free and happy and brilliant course,—in some new Theatre of action. The influences of fond association are delicate, and will not bear harsh and literal discussion; they did what they could in these very quarters, and were brutally disregarded and trampled over. Ours is a generation of stern science. We must see to the realities. Let us turn *them* to the best account we may.

I see much food for poetry and sentiment in the regret of the passing and the past which such a period affords; perhaps it is exactly thus in

each succeeding age. Each generation of men and boys grow up just in time to catch a glimpse of what their Fathers loved and cherished;—and so it melts away. Who knows but Windsor and the Abbey of Westminster—(I speak more in the metaphorical than the literal sense)—may be amongst the fond regrets of our immediate sons and daughters!

[445.]—If *Fraser's Magazine* be a fair statement of the Tory creed, I am no Tory; or but half a Tory. I am a Wellingtonite or Peelite.

*November 17.*

[446.]—The time seems ripening quietly and well. There seems no doubt of the Duke's acceptance of Office, contingent, of course, on the accession of Sir R. Peel.\* I hope no needless difficulties will be made.

I hope Lord Stanley, and the Duke of Richmond, and Sir James Graham, will consent to join.

The time approaches, I trust, when the *second* election under the Reform Bill is to be tried. That was always,—before the first election and ever since,—the point I looked to with confidence and promise.

\* [Then absent in Italy.]

*December 17.*

[447.]—It is now *our* drift and duty to see that all the *benefits* of change be secured: now that the evils *have been* incurred by mooting. On the whole, we (Conservatives, Tories, or rather I would say Peelites) would rather not have had so and so touched or redressed,—(admitting the error or abuse),—on account of the greater evils and risks of mooting the whole question. But that being forced and passed, [why should we] not secure the benefits as well as the evils and risks of Reform?

*December 25.*

[448.]—"Men not measures" is the more modest and more Tory rule and cry, inasmuch as it is easier and safer to judge of Men than of Measures. Of Men, we may judge by the past: of Measures, we are called to judge by anticipation.

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*February 20, 1835.*

[449.]—The Ministry [of Sir Robert] Peel with the King, the House of Lords, and 306 of the Commons, is strong enough to govern in spite of a factious occasional majority bullied by the shopkeepers, and patronised by Mr. O'Connell, and

already [condemned] and disgraced by the injustice and factiousness of their first vote.

It is clear to my mind that the present House of Commons does not fairly and fully represent the aggregate and intricate interests and opinions of the entire Community; and THAT must ever be the real seat of power. I think, however, the progress is this way, and that one or two more elections, after a moderate interval, will bring things pretty nearly to their old bearings. Either such will be the progress and event, or the House of Lords will become the seat of Government. I think, on the whole, the symptoms favourable towards a gradual return to what we were. Three hundred is a powerful band against more than three hundred mixed and ill-sorted antagonists. Our muster has proved stronger than I expected; albeit the enemy has mustered stronger still.


*February 22.*

[450.]—To make the best of a baddish bargain, I can believe the vote of Thursday last may help to neutralize and stultify the adverse vote on the Address, supposing that likewise carried against the Minister. The vote of Thursday [on the Speakership] will furnish the key to the "want of confidence" vote, which otherwise might have

meant something more than now it possibly can mean.

*February 28.*

[451.]—I must confess there is something [which appears] rather unanswerable in the question addressed to us Conservatives: "If really Reformers, why dissolve the last Parliament? Was it not for the very purpose of defeating Reform?" Yes: for defeating what we hold excess of change; and for securing more moderate and less pledged men. We wear no mask of Reform, but are now ready and anxious to risk considerable changes for the chance of improvement,—for the sake of preserving. It is the Destructives who wear the *mask* of Reform: they who, seeking to destroy and radically change, pretend a desire to improve. We formerly thought things pretty well; well enough; more perfect than any assignable (though not absolutely and inconceivably perfect), and rather chose to avoid the risk of express change entirely. *That* is no longer matter of choice. It now remains for us to preserve, as much as we possibly can, by improving as much as possible. We are tardy and unwilling, but sincere and true Reformers. We have not become what our opponents were: for they never were what we pro-





fess to be and are. They were from the beginning bent on the overthrow and alteration, not on the improvement and preservation of our institutions both in Church and State.

Who are *they*? and who are *we*?—We are the moderate but hearty Tories or Conservatives,—the followers of [Sir R.] Peel and the Duke [of Wellington]; — bent [now] on preservation, through the means of careful change, and improvement, and adaptation; though not unwilling to have remained as we were before. *They* are the Radicals, and Repealers, and so forth; and the interested, reckless, selfish, and desperate [Rump of the] Whigs, who risk such an alliance: *they* are also the timid and lukewarm spectators, who consent to abide aloof the issue of such a contest. Of this sort, perhaps, are all [Reformers] who are unwilling to receive admitted improvements at our hands.


[452.]—A very fair test of the sincerity of Reformers would be, whether they were really pleased or annoyed by undoubted improvements. Nothing will so much bother the destructive “Reformer.” It is on this score, and in this quarter, that I think Sir Robert Peel’s government either now will stand and prosper, or soon will return and eventually triumph. For the

balance has been upset by the aid of the great mass of influence and intelligence in England, who were, and still are sincere Reformers in the above sense, [of seekers of real improvement,] and [in] no other. These will be re-conciliated by the measures of Sir Robert; and so both Whigs and Radicals [will] be driven to the wall; which they both deserve: the one set directly; the other for aiding and abetting.

*March 17.*

[453.]—Sir Robert [Peel] is in for it, and bound, for a multitude of reasons, to complete the experiment how far the application of certain improvements,—no matter at whose hands,—will be sufficient to detach from the Whig and Radical alliance those ancient supporters of the good old cause, who were led away by the cry of “Reform,” and really meant “Improvement” by that word. This were enough, either within the House or out of it. To gain the Whigs, ancient or modern, or the Radicals, I take to be both impossible and undesirable. On the other hand, the alliance of such sober and well-meaning people with the Freethinkers, may have corrupted them permanently. But, to balance this, again, they may have got well alarmed and warned at last.

I take it Sir Robert Peel's duty and purpose



is to try whether or not the removal of abuses wherever they may be found, is sufficient to re-unite those who were once attached to our institutions, and really desired to preserve them unimpaired. To gain those who were not content of old, but who aimed at something better,—whose aim was not mere preservation, but improvement,—I hold to be hopeless in the circumstances. And to satisfy the Radicals were, “*a fortiori*,” out of the question.

I still believe so many have thus joined and parted from conscientious dislike of abuse or from alarm,—especially over the country,—especially over *England*,—that another Dissolution ought to be resorted to, after an exposition of Sir Robert’s actual measures and their defeat.

*My* only or chief fear is the delicacy of Sir Robert and the Duke; which may prevent their holding fast till such a completion of the experiment. I have not much doubt of the result, if fully tried. I hope the King will help to compel Sir Robert to go through with the work, which his own modesty might drive him to relinquish.

[454.]—I don’t like some expressions of Sir Robert about resigning, if the Supplies had been limited. He ought not to resign till his

measures have been expounded and successfully opposed; and then an actual appeal has been made to the Country by a fresh Dissolution whose result should prove equally unfavourable or more so: short of all this were insufficient and unfair. He has virtually and pretty nearly expressly promised as much. Short of all this, he had better, perhaps, not have taken up the reins at all for the present.

Sir Robert's is, at this hour, perhaps the most delicately difficult position a Minister was almost ever placed in. If he get not through, no other could. If any could, he will.—My *only* misgiving is his modesty and the Duke's, and their fear of offending.

March 18.

[455.]—Thoughts a little gloomy, both private and political. I have no notion of taking for granted the assumed powers of the House of Commons, as if these were now greater than ever. Assuredly they ought to be less. I mean by *ought*, that it is reasonable to believe there are fewer elements of strength in that quarter now than before; now when representing one class principally or alone, than before when representing all classes.—Another thing provokes me; that the fair and true line of the Reforming

Tories has not been properly stated: that of the "minimum" of change, BE THAT WHAT IT MAY, and especially the point about "mooting" and actually changing elsewhere of itself altering the whole shape of our position.

*April 3.*

[456.]—So! Ministers this morning defeated by a majority of thirty-three. This looks, I must confess,—even I,—as if the game were up. The others must have their turn. I trust we may survive their help.

How bravely Sir Robert has fought the good fight!

[457.]—Thoughts pretty stout and resigned. A little staggered with the Thirty-Three; but confident that right and the truth must be strongest, and in the end prevail. And not much less confident that truth and the right and the strength are with our friends, even now. I expect to see "The Times" for the season a good staunch opposition Paper (its ancient and most accustomed berth and shape)—I mean, supposing Sir Robert and the Duke to resign. I think "The Times" will adhere,—because I think the general voice will adhere:—and, in that case, let the Russell Corps dissolve Parliament if they

dare;—and if they dare not, let our friends now dare and do it.

*April 5.*

[458.]—Of old, the virtual omnipotence of the House of Commons, was no usurpation; because, by tacit convention, *all* the powers and opinions, and interests of the Community, were represented there; all had a share in its construction: it was agreed that ~~THERE~~ nearly the whole battle should be fought.

But *now*, a similar *exertion* of authority, supreme and single, were mere usurpation; and on no better ground than the name and memory of the former predicament, now only in name identical. The House of Commons is now really the House of *Commons*, and nothing more. It pretends, however, to the full powers of old conceded tacitly, but willingly and truly, to the composite body. And in this it is encouraged by the arrogance of its “Movement” members, and their vulgar constituents; and by the timidity and concession of our party and its friends. By the concession that the House of Commons is now more powerful than ever ought not to be: [as before urged] I mean by *ought*, that it has not the substance and reality of authority and its groundwork that once it had.

But how all this is to be felt and re-adjusted, and re-acknowledged, I cannot tell.

*April 8.*

[459]—What a triumph to the “*Times*” and us, if the Monster remain faithful and follow us into exile, and help our return! And this, I think, not at all unlikely. I believe “*The Times*” finds out well, and well adheres to the prevailing Public Opinion; and I cannot believe that with the Whig-Radical party now. As it was against the Tories on Reform and elsewhere. Not that Reform was therefore right, but perhaps therefore inevitable; and probably right, —in spite of us.

*April 9.*

[460.]—Ay! So the blow has been struck, and Whig rule resumed! But how high Sir Robert stands! \* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Our

Conservative party will be able fully and effectually to check, and safely limit all the mea-

asures of Government. The "Times" is stanch; and I have no doubt echoes the prevailing voice.

*April 10.*

[461.]—It is rather difficult at present to know what to wish, or what to believe likely. Allowing something for the risk of confounding belief and wish,—or believing too readily what we wish; I should say that I wish, and half believe, that what we have now to look to ere long, is the return of Sir Robert Peel to the head of affairs, strengthened in public opinion by the help of Lord Stanley \* \* \*; with the understanding of a fresh dissolution of Parliament, if found still requisite, and after full proclamation of intended measures. For my own part, I would much rather see so and so now carried in the way of change, than successfully resisted, *now that once mooted fully*; and for the purpose of detaching from the destructive alliance those who, by "Reform" intend "improvement" of our existing institutions.

Towards this arrangement, is probably requisite an interregnum of incipient anarchy. \* \* \* The interregnum will be in the shape of a weak and hollow Radical-Whig compromise, and pseudo-government, just long enough to damage



themselves, and disgust the Community at large. [Then] for the real reign of Peel and genuine Conservation !

[462.]—From the last dying speech of Sir Robert, I rather infer that the House of Commons is still to remain by tacit convention the ostensible and real seat of the whole powers that be. It remains, therefore, to be seen how some of the ancient influence on votes and elections may be recovered. Perhaps best by the alternation of "Liberal" governments, and their inevitable exigencies ; most powerfully by the returning sobriety of the Shopkeepers of England, and afterwards of Scotland too ; on their discovery, at length, that their own best interest is served by obliging their best customers, and by tranquillity. It is to my mind quite obvious and certain, that if the House of Commons is to be admitted as the sole and supreme depository of public power henceforth, and much as heretofore, then must some quiet substitute be allowed to grow, in lieu of the Close-Borough system. Possibly the disgraces and losses of unsuccessful war, and even a touch of revolutionary anarchy may be requisite to pom-mel us into this compromise.

I hope and believe we may and will do without

such violent remedies. But it is certain that, to be fair and firm, all the powers and interests and opinions that be must share in due proportion,—much as of old.

*April 11.*

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\* \* \* I have some right to praise him. [Sir R. Peel,] I did not wait, like [so many] others, for the event, and in the mean time qualify and distrust, but spoke out early and unequivocally. Let the immediate instance prove an illustration for the

past, and an earnest for the future. I ventured the other day [to except] from his right doing and thinking, his resignation [of office], and dread to act resolutely and harshly ; as seemed requisite and necessary. I should have made no such exception : already convinced he best knew how and what to do, and when, even in such delicate matters, involving his own estimate of himself, and care for the opinion of others. He has done beautifully. The enemy will be confounded, and soon punished :—the King and country are with Sir Robert :—

The champion of our Constitution, and Religion, and Laws !

*April 18.*

[464.]—I gather from the newspapers that the worst of all arrangements is about to be adopted, viz., an ostensible pure Whig government ; of course, under the guidance and at the mercy of [Mr.] O'Connell. The only comfort is, that neither this, nor any other device will long serve their turn. Truth and the right must soon prevail ; and these are not in and with the Coalition. These are but steps and stages of Sir Robert's more illustrious triumph.

It is to be feared, in the mean time, that all the measures of Reform which Sir Robert broached,—


(and in his hands they were safe and worth paying as the price or composition for peace; as well as in themselves right, and a security against farther change; right in themselves, and, *once mooted*, right to be brought forward),—will be taken at once for granted by the new Government; and it is difficult to see how they can be now refused.

But I am wrong in saying so and so is to be *feared*: it is to be expected, and even desired. The carrying of so and so will help to restore the ancient equilibrium; no matter by whom carried. And even if by the Whig-Radicals, they will still be recognised as originating with Sir Robert Peel.

Every abuse removed strengthens the hands—of the Tories, say I: of the Whigs, says the Chronicle of this morning.

[465.]—Is it not strange, absurd, and lamentable that no one in written or spoken words comes forward to protest and expound the true position of the Tories as converts to Reform?

To confess their mistake and adopt a new course would be conversion. Such is not our predicament. To make the best of a bad, needless, ill-advised Measure, now that it is passed and irrevocable, is no conversion, no confession of error. **BUT IT IS OUR DUTY.**



Moreover, though resisting *Parliamentary* Reform, we both were and are sincere and not altogether unwilling Reformers in most other quarters: and now, of course, more than ever, not for the purpose of place or conciliation, but because our *chief* objection to many improvements was the fear of unsettling and mooting the whole; and now that objection is at an end, inasmuch as the whole both is [and] has been mooted and unsettled, in spite of all we could do or desire.

Better [probably] had they not been mooted. But that is now needless, and from the purpose to urge.

Conversion, indeed!

The point for our antagonists to make out, if they could, would be a design or desire on the part of the Tories to revoke or repeal the Reform Bill, and so forth. They know none such exists. To make the best of things is not to revoke, but turn them to good account.


Let us but keep compact and true, and I back Sir Robert and the Conservatives a thousand to one against the Field!

*April 19. [1835.]*

[466.]—Give a little time to recover the stunning and soften the acerbity of defeat, and then we may begin to remember how much worse things might

have been. That the Radicals might ostensibly as well as really have gained. They will presently tire of keeping in the back-ground, and begin to quarrel with their allies. In the mean time, perforce, and at their responsibility, not ours, and without undue concession on our part, will be removed certain stumbling-blocks in the way of permanent Conservative rule. It seems very likely that the new Ministers will take their cue in most things from Sir Robert Peel's Programme, which they said he took from them. And this, though about as provoking to us as the November turn-out was, naturally enough, to them, must still be acknowledged a fair and wholesome compromise. As I have said already, I would *now* rather see such and such farther changes than not see them ; and although in some hands they might have been safer than in other hands, still I would rather have them thus than not at all. So much for the sincerity of my conversion to Reform.

I don't quite despair of seeing the adoption of a similar view by the House of Lords. Now that so and so has been carried and mooted, it were better than not that so and so besides should follow: better, because each remaining abuse is a handle to the enemies of Conservative order, and a thorn and impediment in our way. Perhaps, too, exaction [by the enemy] is, on the



whole, a less dangerous shape for change than volunteered concession by the Constitutional opponents of change. I would like to see so and so done; and perhaps would rather see it done by the enemy than by ourselves.

Soon after which, the great, conservative, interested, purblind Public will grow dead sick of the Whigs, and alarmed at the Radicals; and will force back Sir Robert and his men with sober and resolute triumph: and he will unite with Lord Stanley and other good hands, and rule us well for five and twenty years. From about this time next year I would date the commencement of his reign.

Something, too, will have been put in train for Ireland. It is difficult, however, to see how the Irish Church question is to be managed in the House of Lords. I think the "Butchers" dare not dream of Creations; and a repetition of the threat might be almost as bad. Some way [doubtless] will be found to escape. I am satisfied our general tendency is more and more Conservative. Perhaps there was too much of triumph in our recent predicament—albeit none of our own seeking: too much of humiliation and bitterness for the wretched Whigs. The issue of every great Political struggle *ought* to partake, more or less, of the nature of a compromise. What is it ever but the ascertainment of the real

and true composition of the [WHOLE] forces that be? Including under the word forces all the [genuine] interests, wishes, and opinions of the Community.

This consideration lies at the very root of my Political Creed. It was, and is, because I firmly believed our old *régime* the best interpreter and exponent of that composite energy, that I clung to it while it lasted, and now predict a gradual and virtual return to some equivalent. THE BASIS OF MY POLITICAL FAITH IS AS BROAD AS THE COMMUNITY IS WIDE.

FINIS.









